

Sharing the Same Agenda: The Public Library and the Deaf Community

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between the public library and the Deaf community in the United States. A review of literature showed that while resources on this subject exist, no evidence could be found of any studies directly involving, or based on input from the Deaf themselves. Literature was also examined for resources identifying elements of deafness and Deaf culture which may relate to use of the public library, as well as ethical practices and procedures which are desirable when conducting research on Deaf participants. A nationwide survey of members of the American Deaf community was undertaken. This survey investigated the extent to which the Deaf utilise the public library and its associated services. It also identified factors which serve as impediments to their use. Survey results indicated that while the majority of respondents rarely visit a public library, interest in books and Deaf literature collections is high. Interestingly the public library not seen as a good place to meet other Deaf people but is seen as a friendly environment. Difficulties in communicating with library staff, absence of interpreted events, and building design issues are identified as barriers to use. Areas of potential further study were identified.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The historical relationship between libraries and the Deaf has been described as tenuous, and similarly to analysis of the world of deafness itself, exceedingly complex (Wright & Davie, 1989; McQuigg, 2003). The public library, in theory one of the community resources best placed to be of service to the Deaf has been found in practice not to be doing so (Deines-Jones, 2007).

As a librarian working for a public library system serving a large Deaf population, the writer has taken a particular interest in the relationship between that public library system and the local Deaf community. With an estimated 3,000 Deaf people in Frederick County, Maryland, their presence in the community is a sizeable one in terms of numbers. It is the authors observation however, that their presence in the local public library is less conspicuous.

The aim of this dissertation is to probe what is evidently an existing gap in studies of the relationship between public libraries and the Deaf, to obtain a picture of the nature of that relationship based on viewpoints of the Deaf themselves, and from the results obtained to provide public librarians with knowledge of how service and connections to the Deaf may be enhanced.

In order to achieve this, the following objectives will be met:

- To examine relationships between the public library and the Deaf identified in previous studies, as well as the relationship to Deaf culture and it's inherent

facets, which are relevant to the philosophies of the Deaf towards the public library.

- To investigate perceptions of the public library by the Deaf themselves and to measure this as a factor in the provision of services.
- To identify the best practices published in previous studies for undertaking research with the Deaf as participants, and to follow these practices in carrying out the research to obtain the abovementioned data.

This research is not intended to be a case study as such of the writer's library and community. Rather the study will draw from a survey sample reflecting multiple communities of the deaf, although those community population sizes are not known given the unavailability of reliable information on Deaf populations in the United States.

This dissertation takes as its starting point a quote which provides an intriguing, perhaps cryptic indication of the state of play between the public library and the deaf:

Not only are the deaf not on the agendas of public librarians but anecdotal evidence suggests that the situation is mutual...

(McQuigg, 2003, p. 367)

The key word here is "anecdotal" since as will be noted, very little of the available literature on relationships between libraries (of any kind) and the Deaf is based on or incorporates expressions by the Deaf themselves. As such, it is intended that this dissertation, by soliciting the viewpoint of members of the Deaf community will to some degree help to fill that gap.

Definitions and distinctions

A basic and generally accepted definition of deafness can be found in the wording “the audiological condition of not hearing” (Corker, 1998, p.4). While there is general agreement on medical definitions of ‘deafness’ and ‘hard of hearing’, from undertaking this research on the Deaf, what emerges above all else, and will be identified in this dissertation, is the enormous complexity of the subject of deafness and the world of the Deaf. Far from being a homogenous population, all characterized by hearing loss, it can be said that the Deaf comprise as diverse a group as the hearing population. A common distinction made in literature concerning deafness, and one which serves as an example of the complicated subject matter, is between the words “deaf” and “Deaf”. The former is taken to refer to the audiological condition of lack of hearing, while the latter refers to deafness as being cultural and implying membership in a linguistic and cultural community, as opposed to being a medical condition. The complexities of the lively debate on these variant spellings are considerably beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, in this dissertation the conventional spelling of “Deaf” will be followed to refer to that community.

This dissertation is divided into chapters. Chapter 2 will review the literature relating to library services to the Deaf, characteristics of Deaf culture as a factor in library use, and best practices for conducting investigations involving participation by the Deaf. Analysis and justification of the methodology used to address the aim of this research will be found in chapter 3. In chapter 4 empirical data from the survey instrument will be presented for analysis, and discussed in chapter 5 in accordance with the aim and objectives of this research. In conclusion, chapter 6 will summarize the findings of this research in relation to the research question, and offer recommendations for

improving public library services to the Deaf. Suggestions for further study will also be found.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A significant aspect of this literature review is that reviewing the author biographies and qualifications reveals that in most cases (largely through self-identification) it is possible to discover whether an author is Deaf (or hard of hearing). One cannot be certain, but based on this self-identification, or lack of it, it may well be that the vast majority of the resources cited on the libraries and the Deaf are written by *hearing* authors. If so, therein lies the heart of the question to be studied in this dissertation, and at the same time, illustrates the most glaring omission in the body of literature on relationships between libraries and the Deaf. The common denominator is that by and large, authors who identify as being Deaf (and it follows, the perceptions of the Deaf world) are not represented. In short, it is a manifestation of the very problem which surfaces in literature about the world of the Deaf, namely that it is but one further example of the hearing Community imposing their values and priorities on a Deaf community which regards them as ignorant and unwanted (Lane, 1996; Holcomb, 2013).

This literature review seeks to draw together previous research into libraries and the Deaf, in addition to literature on Deaf communities and Deaf culture, and their inclusion in research projects. Tied together it will provide a platform for studying the perceptions of the public library from the Deaf themselves and to demonstrate the extent to which such analysis fills a considerable void.

2.2 Search Strategy Used

Free Internet based resources	<p>British Library Catalogue (www.bl.uk)</p> <p>British Library Ethos (www.bl.uk/ethos)</p> <p>Gallaudet University Library Catalogue (http://catalog.wrlc.org/search/index.php)</p> <p>Gallaudet University Index to Deaf Periodicals (http://liblists.wrlc.org/gadpi/)</p> <p>Library of Congress Online Catalog https://catalog.loc.gov/</p> <p>National Institute for the Deaf (NTID) Deaf Index (www.ntid.rit.edu/deafindex/article)</p>
Restricted access electronic resources	<p>Academic Search Premier</p> <p>Article First (OCLC)</p> <p>Cambridge Journals Online</p> <p>Directory of Open Access Journals</p> <p>JSTOR</p> <p>Library & Information Science Abstracts</p> <p>Library & Information Science & Technology Abstracts</p> <p>World of Science Social Sciences Citation Index</p> <p>WorldCat (OCLC)</p>

Table 1 Sources of Metadata

Search terms used:

- Library or libraries and deaf or hearing impaired or hard of hearing
- Library or libraries and deafness
- Library or libraries and sign language
- Library or libraries and disability or disabilities
- Deaf culture
- Deaf community or communities
- Surveying and deaf or disabled or disabilities
- Research and deaf or disabled or disabilities
- Ethics or ethical and research and deaf

2.3 Libraries and the Deaf

Much of the existing literature that relates to the Deaf in conjunction with libraries of any sort does exist is dated, and largely anecdotal. Research on the relationship between libraries and the Deaf was largely non-existent, and services to this population largely overlooked until the mid 1970's. At this point, Alice Hagemeyer, a Deaf librarian at Washington, DC public library and a considerable advocate for the Deaf community, sought to in 1975 to both increase awareness about deafness, and encourage Deaf people to visit libraries (Hagemeyer, 1975). While seeking to make libraries of all kinds more accessible for Deaf users, Hagemeyer's writings also sought ways to build bridges and a two way street between both parties, noting at the same time that any change will not be instant, and perhaps tellingly that "It may be years before the public library can really help the deaf community. First it will be necessary for the deaf to learn something about public libraries" (Hagemeyer, 1975, p.32). For the public library however:

A few facts about deafness and a short list of additional readings are not enough background for a librarian who wants to effect an improvement in library services to the deaf. A few stabs at better collections or services to the deaf won't help much if you really want to provide better services to an isolated community of citizens...It is necessary for one to understand the culture and communication of deaf people, their information needs, and their suspicion of professionals who want to do something for them – rather than with them.

(Hagemeyer, 1975 p. 1)

One of the few Deaf librarians to contribute to the literature on connecting libraries with the Deaf, Hagemeyer's writing between the mid 1970's and 1990's marks her as one of the biggest influences on what became an evolving growing awareness of this subject. This increased awareness was due in no small way to Gallaudet University in the United States, the first college for the Deaf in the world introducing courses on library services to the Deaf for librarians in 1974 (Dalton, 1985).

Published in 1985, Phyllis Dalton's book 'Library Service to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired' remains to this day the most comprehensive single book published on the subject. Although dated in many areas by now, particularly with regard to the assistive technology devices mentioned, Dalton's solid overview and dual examination of the characteristics of Deaf culture and ways in which in which libraries could serve this very different population, (which until then had been largely overlooked) was at the time a groundbreaking work. One questionable aspect of the book however is the fact that nowhere can any mention whatsoever be found of Dalton's credentials; a puzzling omission from a reputable publisher. Nevertheless, Dalton's work succeeded in laying bare the challenges faced by libraries, particularly the public library, which are particularly pertinent to the research question posed in this dissertation:

The deaf are a difficult and challenging clientele for the library to serve. For them, most libraries hold no particular attraction. Profoundly deaf children have a severe learning disability. They are poor readers because they have never heard words nor have they been clued into word conceptualism through learning. The deaf community lives in another world.

(Dalton, 1985 p. xii)

Frameworks and guidelines for services to the Deaf subsequently appeared in the shape of The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) guidelines for Library Service to Deaf People in 1991 (Day, 1992) and later updated in 2000. The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (1996) adapted a version specifically for the United States. Both sets of guidelines are almost identical in wording and somewhat broad, covering matters relating to personnel, communication, collection development, services, and marketing. A brief, very generally worded reference to the latter notes that "people who were born deaf or

deafened at an early age tend not to use libraries... it is essential, therefore, for libraries to target the deaf community with special marketing efforts” (Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, 1996, p.16).

The labelling of deafness as a hidden, non readily visible disability, and one therefore which makes it difficult for libraries to make a connection to, is a recurring theme, (Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, 1986; Velleman, 1990; Wright & Davie, 1991; Library Association, 1992).

The introduction of several important pieces of disability legislation in the shape of the Disability Discrimination Act in the United Kingdom and Australia and the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States, and a commensurate awareness of the implications for libraries serving the disabled gave rise to a flurry of literature in the last decade of the twentieth century examining disability in a library context.

It is in that context that deafness is seen as a complex and misunderstood disability, with the inherent problem being seen as one of communication and the stereotypical view that deafness is the same from one Deaf person to another (Velleman, 1990; Wright & Davie, 1991; Forrest, 1997; Deines-Jones, 2007). The former however elaborates further by defining eight different groups of deaf individuals and differences between for instance, those born into hearing families, those raised by deaf parents, and those who lost their hearing after completion of their education. Very tellingly Wright & Davie, (1989) note that “libraries will find that entry into the deaf community to serve its information needs is difficult” (p. 76). Alluding to the differences that exist between the Deaf and hearing worlds and the sensitivity of

communication between the two, fear of rejection often leads to the Deaf isolating themselves from the hearing world. With their own information systems in place in the deaf community, the extent to which the public library needs to connect with that community is spelled out by Wright & Davie (1989), who echo the sentiments of McQuigg (2003) in saying “All too often the library is viewed by the deaf community as another one of the municipal institutions which cannot, or will not be any use to them” (p. 76).

The implication is that clearly libraries have traditionally not been part of Deaf culture, something that is clearly borne out in the library literature. An important element of Deaf culture has been the existence of Deaf clubs and organizations which serve as information providers for members of that community. That they do so is to some extent attributable to bad experiences or memories associated with the library. The frustration of trying to communicate with hearing staff is one reason; negative feelings may also be exacerbated by the fact that in some deaf schools the library was the venue where students were sent to detention as punishment for misbehaving (Hagemeyer, 1992; Jeal, DePaul Roper, & Ansell, 1996; Moore & Levitan, 2003; Playforth, 2004). Adding to that sense of self-containment, numerous barriers can serve to separate the library and the Deaf. The most basic and wide reaching one being the fact that simply put, library services are naturally designed for users who can hear. Specific, and frequently overlooked obstacles include for example, an emphasis on verbal information, lack of staff training on communication and interaction with the deaf and staff attitudes towards such interactions. Uninviting physical environments which inhibit the deaf can include poor lighting and impaired visibility thereby not allowing clear sign language or lip reading communication,

problematic acoustics caused for example by a tiled rather than a carpeted floor, and background noises which might be deemed as acceptable by the hearing, but are disconcerting to users who have a hearing device, are examples. Public address systems and warning alarms are of little use by the Deaf unless accompanied by visual aids. Clear directional signage is of increased importance. While the Deaf are often seen as lacking the ability to hear, of equal significance to libraries is the fact that their reading and writing skills may be at a very low level. We naturally learn to communicate through hearing others talk. When the ability to do so is absent; if those sounds contained in speech are not there it is evident why estimates suggest that almost 90% of those who are born deaf are functionally literate upon leaving school. (Weir & Law, 1986; McDaniel, 1992; Jeal, DePaul Roper & Ansell, 1996; Playforth 2004; Crump, 2009; Riley, 2009).

Lower literacy levels, libraries' inaccessibility and perceived lack of welcome has made libraries particularly unenticing to Deaf users (McQuigg, 2003). With newly legislated requirements to meet the needs of the disabled propelling a heightened awareness of Deafness and the Deaf as potential library users, the need to be proactive and to take the lead in reaching the Deaf and connecting them to the library rather than the other way round has been illustrated by some successful relationships.

Taking a leading role, reaching out to the deaf community and developing collections and services accordingly is vital, (Velleman, 1990; McDaniel, 1992; Norton & Kovalik, 1992; Allen, 2007, and Slater, 2013), although little attention is given in these sources to the fact that one cannot do so without paying particular attention to the unique communication concerns of the Deaf. While the nature of technology

designed to make the library more accessible to the Deaf has evolved over the years, the role of facilitative technology in connecting the library to the Deaf is unchanged. Indeed, the importance of ensuring that virtual space is as accessible as their physical buildings is often forgotten (Mates, 2011). Some examples of appropriate technology include accessible websites, films and videos with captions and sign language interpretation, and text telephone or text teletype devices. A precursor of Instant Messaging, these devices are still used with telephones, including mobile phones allowing for typed messages between two parties although free and easy to use Instant Messaging is now more largely used (Bell & Peters, 2006).

There is a public relations role for technology. For instance a signed and subtitled welcoming video is particularly relevant to the visually orientated Deaf community. Whereas the physical library itself may contain identifiable barriers to forming relationships with the Deaf, the advent of the Internet offers a radically different pathway, one which is in many ways suited to, and embraced by the Deaf. Although sound and video clips as complementary components result in the Deaf losing access in its entirety, the visual, text based nature of the internet readily lends itself more readily as an effective medium of communication to a Deaf community audience (Lazar & Jaeger, 2011). Mobus, (2010) offers a contrasting viewpoint, suggesting that the text based nature of the Internet is not necessarily advantageous to the Deaf and furthermore cannot be considered by itself to be a replacement of acoustic information given the need to have adequate literacy levels to benefit from it. Rather, the potential of the Internet for the Deaf can be fulfilled only when its content is offered in Sign Language, seen as a more accessible language for the Deaf. While challenges exist,

clearly there are implications for the public library in utilizing the Internet to good effect as a means of marketing to the Deaf (Day, 1999).

Further emphasizing the importance of visual means of communication, clear signage, provision of sign language interpreters at library programmes and thoughtful use of informational leaflets are additional integral ingredients (Day, 1999; Playforth, 2004). The final approach to reaching the Deaf and the most important partnership is, not surprisingly with the Deaf community itself. Crump (2009) recommends ad-hoc local user groups that meet with library staff to review resources and support good staff practices. Simply undertaking outreach visits to applicable community agencies and groups is a widely cited option. An important omission in these sources is that this may be easier said than done given the need to use sign language interpreters (Nixon & Skinner, 1995; Noland, 2003; Rodriguez and Reed, 2003; Marks, 2005). While the latter two articles describe how several public library services have been shaped to serve the Deaf community and demonstrate successful relationships with that user group, fleeting references to Deaf culture do not amply illustrate its uniqueness as a culture, and those inherent values which make the Deaf such an elusive user group for a public library.

One of the few research studies on the needs of Deaf library users to actually incorporate survey data from the Deaf themselves examined the research needs and library comfort levels of university students without hearing. The findings from the study by Saar and Arthur-Okor (2013), based on a questionnaire and focus group, essentially corroborated the abovementioned recommendations for bridging the gap between the library and the Deaf but the key to success, based on the student

responses, lies with opening lines of communication, maintaining them and being seen to value the Deaf as library users.

Selecting materials appropriate for the Deaf community presents particular challenges. While there is general agreement on the reasons behind the unique literacy and language acquisition needs of the Deaf (in particular, those from birth), only minimal research has addressed the link between the public library, the development of reading skills, and indeed the entire subject of building collections for the Deaf.

One notable exception to this, a study by Golos, Moses, & Wolbers, (2012), examined the link between picture books and the development of identity by researching the portrayal of the deaf in children's literature. A survey of picture books containing Deaf characters found a largely positive portrayal of the characters; depictions which can serve to provide positive role models for Deaf children. While a Deaf child, in particular one born to hearing parents may start off at a disadvantage in terms of language acquisition, the public library can play a influential role in enabling Deaf children to learn reading skills simply by providing those children with the stimulating experience of seeing a librarian read aloud. It is suggested that this, in turn, will foster an appreciation of books (Lajoie, 2003). The selection of materials for the Deaf is not without difficulty. Finding basic literacy books with a balanced text which is at not too complex a level for the Deaf reader is not easy to do. Given the visual learning strength of the Deaf, books containing some basic sign language illustrations, and above all else feature materials with illustrations of good quality (whatever the subject matter) are recommended. (Jeal, de Paul Roper, & Ansell, 1986; Lajoie, 2003; MacMillan, 2004).

While literature on this aspect of the relationship between the public library and the Deaf may be thin, the potentially positive role of the public library in facilitating access to resources of this type is clear to see.

2.4 The Deaf Community and Deaf Culture

In contrast to available research investigating the relationship between the Deaf and libraries, there is an abundance of literature on the Deaf themselves. As with those resources on the library and the Deaf, the majority of it is from American sources. In contrast to available literature on libraries and the Deaf, many of the resources on Deafness stem from the unique perspective of the Deaf themselves.

For the purposes of this dissertation, examination is made of available literature on the concept of the Deaf community and the Deaf culture that exists within; what constitutes the Deaf community and how one defines Deaf culture, its inherent values and why such values and its salient characteristics might have important implications for the public library seeking to form successful relationships with the Deaf.

The one overriding message that emerges from this copious literature is the complexity of Deafness, not from a medical point of view necessarily, but more from a sociological standpoint and that attempting to define the Deaf world is fraught with difficulty (Skelton & Valentine, 2003). A succinct and tidy view of the Deaf community can perhaps be seen in the following definition:

Although the Deaf live in a world without sound, it is the same world we all inhabit...they have created for themselves as well as a strong sense of identity, an authentic social community, and many cultural traditions.

(Neisser, 1983, p. 8)

If that is the case, there is, however no such thing as a typically Deaf adult or a typically Deaf community (Higgins & Nash, 1982). The latter may be seen variously as a group of people based on linguistic, ethnic, social, cultural, or disability related factors, but lacking a clearly distinguishable characteristic or trait (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Schein, 1989; Lane, 1996). Padden and Humphries (1988) in what is regarded as a pioneering study of Deaf culture, cite the existence of distinct black and white American Sign Languages in the United States as but one example of this community diversity. As already noted, there is widespread agreement amongst commentators that a distinction exists between what is denoted by the various Deaf/deaf spellings. (Higgins & Nash, 1982; Dolnick, 1993; Preston, 1995; Reagan, 1995; Corker, 1998; Monaghan, 2003; Skelton & Valentine, 2003). One exception however suggests that this distinction is completely unworkable, not to mention confusing (Preston, 1995). In section 2.3 it was noted that an additional distinction of a different kind can also be seen in sub dividing the deaf into those born without hearing (prelingually Deaf) and those who lose their hearing later in life (post-lingually Deaf), (Neisser, 1983).

A community may be comprised of many different strands and cultural groups, in that respect the Deaf community is no different to others. From their comprehensive study of how young people in the British Deaf community see themselves, Skelton & Valentine (2003) observed that such communities are small in number, tight knit and seen as a “small world” (p. 458). Yet, it is the inability to agree on what exactly the Deaf community is that makes the Deaf perhaps such a nebulous group.

Paradoxically, to be a member of the Deaf community, one need not actually be Deaf; nor can it be said that all Deaf people belong to the Deaf community (Kyle & Woll, 1988; Gregory & Hartley, 1991). It is noted that the majority of those with hearing loss are not members, not wanting to be associated with the Deaf population, preferring instead to be in the company of hearing people, while (perhaps of potential interest to the public library) membership may include those who do hear but support community goals and work with the Deaf to reach them (Higgins, 1980; Wilcox, Higgins & Nash, 1982; Kyle & Woll, 1988; Wilcox, 1989). Conversely in what is still regarded as a seminal work on the Deaf community, Jacobs, (1974) sees the adult Deaf community as made up of Deaf adults gravitating towards each other aided by the sharing of mutual problems, interests and language.

While defining the boundaries of the term ‘Deaf community’ may be problematic, a central tenet of such communities and Deaf culture itself is widely identified as sign language (Masschark & Spencer, 2003; Monaghan, 2003). Deaf culture manifests itself through this complex, native language. Indeed, use of sign language is regarded by some as the principal criterion for membership (Baker & Battison, 1980; Kyle & Woll, 1988; Lane, 1996) and intrinsic to Deaf identity (Harris, 1995).

Deaf culture itself, while prominently interwoven with sign language is also described as encompassing unique heritage, attitudes and values which have their roots in what has historically been seen by the Deaf as an oppressive hearing world (Reagan, 1995; Berbrier, 1998; Hamill & Stein, 2011). Other core values emerge as being of significance when examined in the context of the research question this dissertation attempts to address. Examples include emphasis on and identification with the group

rather than the individual, a social world which revolves around Deaf Clubs, the existence of a unique brand of self-deprecatory or self-congratulatory humor (frequently expressed in funny stories, caricatures, and cartoons, this frequently revolves around oppression and reflects a hearing versus cultural conflict, and features punch lines which are plays on sign language and would probably be humourless to a non signing person), a cultural world embodied in Deaf world folk stories and literature of the Culture (frequently centred around the concept of a Deaf utopian world where everyone uses the official language, sign language), and certain distinctive norms of communication. For example, while a hearing person is likely to introduce themselves by name, an introduction by a Deaf person is more likely to include not only their name but their town or city as well. Staring is not considered to be polite amongst hearing people, however in sign language conversations the listener is expected to study the face of the person signing throughout the conversation. In this case, breaking eye contact may be construed as being rude by cutting off a main avenue of communication (Rutherford, 1983; Schein, 1989; Lane, 1996; Wilcox, 1989; Holcomb, 2013).

While all of the examples noted above serve to illustrate the distinctiveness of the culture of the Deaf, several stand out as being worthy of note by public libraries. The first, the Deaf Club has traditionally offered the strongest means of group bonding, acculturation, socialization, and the first destination for information gathering (Lane, 1996). The clearest illustration of the place of information among the Deaf results from conversations about their experiences and interactions with each other (Foster, 1989). The picture that emerged was one of the Deaf clearly foregoing superficial and difficult conversations with the hearing and turning to others in the community to

fulfill their information needs and to “learn about the world”. A more up to date assessment by a study of Deaf blogs undertaken by Hamill and Stein (2011), a reflection perhaps on communication preferences today comments on the degree to which the Internet enables the Deaf to benefit from an additional means of connection, both within the community and the wider world. There does not appear however to be any firm data on Deaf Club membership, although estimates point to a steady decline in membership, exacerbated by the Internet (Paddon & Humphries, 2005). Secondly, it is suggested, albeit without apparent hard data, that reading may not be a high priority amongst the Deaf given that sign language has no traditional written form and emphasis has largely been put on the acquisition by Deaf children of good speech articulation instead of high reading and writing levels (Moore & Levitan, 2003). Conversely, Rutherford, (1988) and Holcomb (2013) point to a steady expansion and popularity in recent years of deaf literature, a body of literature created and presented by the deaf community. With over 500 documented magazines, newsletters, and books embodying this genre, the existence of a number of Deaf publishers whose dedicated aim is the publication of Deaf literature in print and electronic format, and the digital age being a prime factor behind this growth, Holcomb (2013) suggests that Deaf literature be viewed as a growing element of minority literature.

Although defining and understanding the meanings of Deaf community and Deaf culture belong to a wider debate, it does emerge that these entities, seen by Holcomb (2013), as a second family have arisen largely in response to the historically negative experiences of the Deaf in the world of the hearing, a world that is designed for those who can hear. In what is considered still today as another leading study of the Deaf

world, Higgins (1983) suggests that the Deaf are “outsiders” in the hearing world, yet to the Deaf, the hearing are similarly “outsiders”, in essence the hearing are lost in the Deaf world just as much as the Deaf are lost in the hearing world, or in the “hearing culture”, (Holcomb, 2013). Much of the feeling of sanctuary provided in the Deaf community arises from the awkward encounters that the Deaf have experienced with the hearing, and the curiosity, stares, hostility, ridicule and embarrassing communication that comes with that. Indeed, from interviews conducted with the Deaf, it is suggested that the average Deaf adult has no desire whatsoever to integrate into the hearing community (Foster, 1989; Skelton & Valentine, 2003). Not only is communication with the hearing seen as so associated with frustration and difficulty, but the closed culture of the Deaf offers a sufficient sense of belonging (Jacobs, 1974; Schein, 1989) Indeed, Rutherford (1983) examining how the Deaf and hearing divide manifests itself in Deaf humour, notes the existence of “think hearing”, a specific sign found in American Sign Language, and one which denotes derogatory identification of the hearing.

In order to understand the Deaf – hearing world collision, Lane (1996), considered one of the most influential writers on the subject, stipulates that the real problem is the “hearing agenda” for the Deaf or more explicitly that the hearing world has an agenda for those with hearing loss, and a broader one for those with disabilities, with the result that all those who have some form of hearing impairment are considered to be disabled. Herein lies the conflict as the hearing world seeks to reduce and eradicate disability in its many forms while Deaf culture resents such intervention, and the notion that they are disabled, and therefore abnormal (Oliver & Barnes, 2012).

According to Lane (2002) if one adopts a simplistic interpretation of the term

disability, then simply put, the Deaf, limited in function by lack of hearing do fit into that category, yet the allowances that society gives to the disabled do not suit the interests of the Deaf. To many Deaf people, being labelled disabled is source of intense conflict, rather they see themselves as members of a linguistic and cultural minority (Dolnick, 1993; Berbrier, 1998; McQuigg, 2003; Moore & Levitan, 2003; Skelton & Valentine, 2003).

Finding cures for deafness and integrating the Deaf and hearing worlds are not on the Deaf agenda. For example Solomon, 1994; Lane, 1996; Maschark & Spencer, 2003; Moore & Levitan, 2003; and Holcomb, 2013, found that hearing aids, gene therapy and cochlear implants, instruments which seek to facilitate hearing, and are tools of the hearing world are sorely contested in the Deaf community which sees them as threats to structure and fabric of Deaf culture from the oppressive hearing world. Indeed, Solomon (1994) noted that few things provoke a more passionate response in Deaf people than the topic of cochlear implants while Dolnick (1993) highlighted the results of a survey which found that 86 percent of deaf adults would not wear an implant even if there were no cost involved. In their very penetrating study of the Deaf world, Lane & Hoffmeister (1996) found that even interpreter services met with fierce criticism from some in the Deaf community.

Although there has been considerable focus on the rift between the Deaf and hearing worlds, Holcomb (2013) in highlighting areas of philosophical difference among the Deaf themselves serves to illustrate exactly why attempting to tackle the divided world of the Deaf is so difficult.

2.5 Ethical Principles in Research Involving the Deaf

That the Deaf community and culture as a whole comprises particularly unique, and misunderstood characteristics has been clearly illustrated in the sections 2.3 and 2.4. What must equally be borne in mind is that those characteristics and culture have a very significant bearing on the way research involving the Deaf is undertaken. Indeed, a number of helpful resources inform us that it is no exaggeration to state that what is considered accepted and desirable practice and protocol in research methodology is not appropriate or applicable research practice where Deaf people are involved.

Values held by the Deaf community have demonstrated implications in terms of ethical conduct by hearing researchers conducting research on the Deaf. Numerous ethical and practical concerns arise and the mix of these two groups with their inherent differences has the potential to result in levels of tension which can serve to derail the research and collaboration undertaken (Skelton & Valentine, 2003; McKee, Schlehofer, & Thew, 2013). Identifiable areas of concern in the Deaf Community towards research involving themselves as subjects include lack of trust towards the hearing researcher, (widely seen as lacking in knowledge of Deaf culture and particularly where there is no knowledge of sign language), a sense of being exploited, overtested, and taken for granted, concerns over a lack of accuracy in the hearing researchers interpretation and dissemination of their findings, and fears over confidentiality and anonymity in what are often closely-knit communities (Baker-Shenk & Kyle, 1990; Pollard Jr, 2002; Harris, Holmes, & Mertens, 2009; McKee, Schlehofer & Thew, 2013; Singleton, Jones, & Hanumantha, 2014). A very distinct perspective is that of a Deaf researcher conducting research on Deaf individuals. Stinson (1994) emphasizing the need for sensitivity to the culture, suggests that

displaying an understanding of Deaf cultural norms and participating in activities of the Deaf community, and even learning sign language is vital if the hearing researcher is to maintain credibility and avert the potential for stereotyping.

Practical concerns also come into play when undertaking research with Deaf participants. The most basic of those concerns is with communication and the “information gap” that can arise from two situations. The first of these being literacy levels of the Deaf, referred to earlier in section 2.3 and which are considerably lower on the whole than the general population. To put this in perspective, it is estimated that just twenty percent of Deaf individuals in America have demonstrated fluency in written English, while the average reading levels for adults are around that of a hearing ten year old (Neisser, 1983; Kroll, Keer, & Placek, 2007). For many pre-lingually and post-lingually Deaf, English is a second language; the primary means of communication being sign language. Secondly, the researcher must be remember that sign language is not simply a visual equivalent of the English language, rather it is made up of a distinct language structure, one which is not based on English and one which does not have a written form (McKee, Schlehofer, & Thew, 2013).

This literature review has incorporated many diverse resources on various aspects of provision of library services to the Deaf. The missing element is the voice of the Deaf and hard of hearing themselves. Other than the research conducted in an academic library by Saar and Arthur-Okor (2013), the author has been unable to find any research study on library services to the Deaf which is identified as being based on or drawn from study or input from the most relevant constituents, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing themselves. To all intents and purposes the user group with an invisible

disability (Day, 1992; Hagemeyer, 1992; Higgins, 1983) which makes them outwardly so hard to identify, has been invisible in the library literature on services for them.

The research undertaken in this dissertation therefore seeks to fill this void.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study was designed with the aim of capturing at first hand data on *why* and *how* the adult Deaf and Hard of Hearing perceive, use, or do not use public library facilities and services. The survey, in essence a user needs study of adult Deaf and hard of hearing people is aimed at gauging their opinions on the public library with the hope that it will help to shed some light on the quote from McQuigg, (2003) which is mentioned in chapter 1 suggesting anecdotally that the public library is not found on the agenda of the Deaf.

There were several questions arising from McQuigg's quote and the literature review that the author sought to investigate. The leading question to be answered was the extent to which the public library is indeed on the agenda of the Deaf adults. To that end, respondents were asked about the extent of contact with the public library. Is the public library something they make use of? If not why not, and if yes, which services are of interest? Respondents were also asked to list what they see as barriers to library use and conversely give reasons why the public library may be seen as Deaf friendly. Learning from the survey how public library services to the Deaf community can be improved was of equal importance and interest and questions were asked in this respect.

The elements of fear, mistrust, and frustration, at risk of being found amongst the Deaf, and directed towards hearing researchers (as noted in section 2.5), in addition to the practical communication issues, suggests that the field of research involving the

Deaf community can be one with many accompanying problems. This need not necessarily be so, and the hearing researcher equipped with an understanding of Deaf culture, its values, and its ways of communication, can overcome such challenges. It was with this sensitivity to the Deaf community that the quantitative and qualitative research for this dissertation was undertaken.

3.2 Justification of the approach selected

A variety of different approaches to the survey were considered in the context of perhaps the most challenging aspect of the study, that of effectively reaching adult Deaf populations. Since no comparable research could be found, there was nothing to base any survey model against. The local Deaf population in the author's local area would have provided a community, and survey sample in place and in theory within reach. On the other hand, a larger sample size, while not being a guarantee of a representative sample, is more likely to result in one, while at the same time reducing the potential for sampling error (Bryson, 2008). Consideration was also given to the significance of the notion of a representative sample of Deaf respondents. One of the largest studies of the Deaf showed that unless one is undertaking a particular case study, no Deaf community is alike in any way, and results should not be generalized from one community to another (Higgins, 1980). A larger sample size can also be beneficial with regard to response rates (Bryson, 2008). A high non-response level was another potential concern and was borne in mind given some of the difficulties previously seen with research involving the Deaf, and identified in chapter 2.

In order, therefore, to gain as a greater breadth of viewpoint, and to draw on the varied experiences of public library use, it was determined that the target group for the survey would be the adult Deaf population nationally in the United States.

In order to reach members of the Deaf community over as wide a geographical area as possible it was decided to use an electronic survey format. Had this been a similar study involving hearing participants, supplementary methods of study and data collection such as in-person interviews and/or focus groups may well have been employed to good advantage in terms of expanding on ideas, thoughts, and answers.

In the case of the Deaf, communication becomes the biggest consideration – and potential barrier unless the researcher is equipped with time and adequate funding. Sign language interpreters must be used which gives rise to another Disseminating the survey electronically alleviated the need to have a Sign Language interpreter present if a paper survey was used, given that the author is not conversant in Sign Language. Therein, in fact lies another difficulty associated with surveying the Deaf, namely that the potential for inconsistent and uneven translation to and from Sign Language must be taken into account. The intensity of translating Sign Language is such that it is considered normal working practice for interpreters to work in pairs, each taking a turn every thirty minutes, thereby adding to potential expenses. Furthermore, since Sign Language is essentially a visually expressive language, body language and the intensity and expression of emotions is an integral part of that form of communication. Capturing such visual representation of a translated interview is not easy to accomplish (Skelton & Valentine, 2003).

The electronic survey was by no means ideal with its most basic limitation obviously being that it connects only those reachable through a computer. An online focus group could perhaps have been utilized with the advantage of reaching participants who might otherwise be inaccessible, eliminating a need to not only video or audio record the session, but also transcribe it (Pickard, 2007; Bryson, 2008). Once again however again the combination of possible limited English skills and sign language preference described in chapter 2 came to the fore in this case.

The most basic consideration was how exactly to reach potential respondents, and in a way that would engender trust. In an effort to make that connection with the Deaf community, the author began by employing a snowballing technique, a demonstrated method of generating contact between a hearing researcher and the Deaf (Higgins, 1980; Bryman 2008; Neuman, 2015). The author commenced by obtaining names of several Deaf adults who might be willing to help with suggestions as to how best and most effectively disseminate the survey, and from those people, additional names and suggestions for distribution points were obtained, and from these even more.

The decline of the Deaf Club has been referred to in chapter 2, and with that decline a natural meeting point of the Deaf has disappeared. Taking advice from contacts fostered in the Deaf community, it was felt that the optimum way to reach a cross section of the community was to direct the survey to state associations for the Deaf, with the request that they forward the survey to their members. In addition, with the virtual meeting place now responsible to a large degree for taking the place of the Deaf Club (as mentioned in section 2.4), the author found that contacts generated through the snowballing process were for the most part willing to post details of the

survey on their Facebook pages as well as those belonging to various Deaf groups nationally.

Ideally perhaps, one might have wished for more control over the survey sample. The possibilities of undertaking some form of stratified random sampling, either by age, or geographical area was considered, but not pursued given the difficulty of identifying the survey population in question. This was largely because demographic or statistical information on Deaf populations in the United States is extremely limited, and identifying where Deaf populations reside, and in what numbers is not possible by any reliable method. For this reason, neither the author's original intention to incorporate a comparison in survey responses between the Deaf in rural and urban areas, nor a clustered survey sampling approach were pursued.

3.3 Methods

A survey was constructed on Survey Monkey with an explanatory covering letter at the beginning of the survey, to the effect that the author was engaged in a Master's degree and asking the respondents for their help (Appendix 1). Advice on the wording and composition of the survey and covering letter was sought from several members of the Deaf community, and their advice proved to be extremely beneficial. Based on their suggestions, the potential information gap, and the importance of visual communication for Deaf people (Skelton & Valentine, 2003) the author arranged for the survey and covering letter to be translated into American Sign Language and be readily accessible as a You Tube video. A link to the video, as well as the written version of the survey appeared in the covering letter. Anonymity was particularly emphasized, given Deaf Community concerns mentioned above in section 2.5. It was

anticipated that attracting respondents to the survey might be challenging, particularly in light of the above mentioned difficulties in engaging with the Deaf. As a result, it was also determined that the survey results would be based on a final total of approximately fifty respondents.

The survey was limited to twelve questions, with a further four demographic questions, to avoid user fatigue (Bryman, 2008). Open questions were limited to a total of four. Those respondents who initially indicated that they do visit a public library were asked why they do so, why they consider the public library to be Deaf and hard of hearing friendly, and conversely not Deaf and hard of hearing friendly. A third open question was asked concerning needs being met in response to a question about attendance at community library events that were interpreted into sign language or had CART (Communication Access Real time Translation) captioning provided, which displays what is said word for word on a screen. Finally, the concluding question asked for suggestions as to how the public library can improve services to the Deaf and hard of hearing communities.

The four demographic questions were designed to elicit data about the respondents in key areas, particularly with a view to using the data for the improvement of public library services to the Deaf. Dividing the respondents into four broad age categories serves to highlight possible differences in responses among those whose education and schooling took place pre and post -Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, as well as various other pieces of disability related legislation stemming from the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960's and 1970's. Asking respondents to describe themselves as Deaf from birth, from age 2, or from adulthood helps shed

light on differing literacy levels with the prelingually Deaf (those in the first category) most likely to be lacking in language development (Neisser, 1983; McKee, Hackett & Schlehofer, 2013).

The remaining two questions asked about preferred methods of communicating with people who don't use sign language as well as with the hearing population in general (which can of course include sign language). The significance of these questions lies in the fact that communication being a two way street, knowledge and understanding of communication preferences is a prerequisite for any library looking to improve services to their Deaf community.

3.3.1 Pilot Survey

The survey was pilot tested with a target of ten responses, which was achieved. It was disseminated electronically through Survey Monkey and on paper. As with the final survey, an American Sign Language translation was made available through a YouTube video link. The data gathered from the pilot survey was coded by a simple, numerical method (Pickard, 2007). After reviewing the pilot results, and from feedback garnered from survey respondents and other members of the Deaf community it was decided to make the following alterations to the survey before sending it out again.

- Changes in wording were made to questions 6 and 8.
 - The term “hearing people” was replaced with “people who don’t sign”, since one can be hearing *and* possess knowledge of sign language.

- In the interests of consistency with question 17 in measuring frequency of visits, “sometimes” was replaced with a more quantifiable “regularly (more than once a month”, additionally allowing for investigation of a possible correlation between in person and virtual visits.
- Question 10 was eliminated from the final survey. It was felt that defining and measuring “a good job” was neither helpful, nor possible, and pilot question 15 on which library services are of most interest was sufficient to gauge interest in particular services.
- Two questions were expanded in order to obtain a more detailed picture of responses.
 - A key aim of the survey was to find out whether other services or sources are being used instead of the public library. Question 12 was thereby amended to further ask *which* alternative services are used.
 - Question 13 was expanded into an open question of two parts inviting respondents to give reasons why the public library is, and is not seen as Deaf friendly.
- Given the extent to which Deaf literature is a distinct genre (see chapter 2), the category “Deaf literature collection” was added to question 15 on library services of interest.

- Questions amended based on feedback from the Deaf:
 - The final survey incorporated the wording ‘Deaf *and Hard of Hearing*’ in order to be as inclusive to all members of the target audience, and not knowing how individuals define themselves.
 - Question 8 and 9 on extent of contact with the public library and reasons for this were modified to ask firstly *how often*, and secondly, *why?*, the latter term being seen as more linguistically appropriate in sign language than “*what are the reasons for?*”
 - The public library may not be a good place to meet up with other Deaf people but they may still use it to do so. Question 11 was changed to ask “*how often* do you use the library to meet up with other Deaf people”?
- Overall design changed:
 - Demographic questions moved from the very beginning to the end (Pickard, 2007).
 - Questions on gender and life period of Deafness not seen as directly relevant to the study, and were eliminated.

3.4 Methods of data analysis

The survey gathered a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. The combined approach was a reflection on one hand of the need to undertake a basic statistical analysis of questions which are likely to have been easy and quick to answer, (and for the author to compare answers) while also inviting a degree of elaboration, reasoning behind an answer, and the self-expression of the Deaf to those answers (Pickard, 2007; Bryman, 2008; Neuman, 2015). In addition it should be noted that an emphasis

on simple quantitative questioning may have been advantageous given Deaf literacy and communication concerns. After the data was collected, a grid was made and answers to questions were numbered in order to allow for coding. Answers to open questions were grouped together and compared with one another to ensure that concepts would result (Bryman, 2008). All of the data was entered and analysed using SPSS software.

3.5 Limitations and lessons drawn

Gathering data from the Deaf resulted in unique experiences and challenges. The design of the survey and cover letter underwent many revisions in their wording even before it was piloted. After reviewing different versions of the survey the author was reminded that most culturally Deaf people, (as defined in chapter 1), in the United States are native American Sign Language users and English is a second language to them. Very few are what might be called balanced bilinguals. Many Deaf readers struggle to understand complex vocabulary or sentence structures, for instance words such as “virtual” or “seldom”, and phrases such as ‘are of most interest to you’. As a result, both the pilot, final survey, and covering letters incorporated what was, according to advice from the Deaf community, deemed to be more understandable grammar.

In addition it was pointed out to the author that American Sign Language and Deaf culture tends to be very direct and Deaf readers appreciate questions that get right to the point. For instance, the originally worded question, “would that impact your visits?” was modified to ‘would you visit more often?’

The available literature on research methodology using Deaf subjects reflects one consistent theme, namely that it raises unique challenges for the researcher, and one fraught with potential pitfalls unless thought and sensitivity to the Deaf world are the main ingredients. From the research methodology undertaken for this dissertation, the author can concur with many of the most frequently cited barriers to research with Deaf people, and their fairly impenetrable community. As a population, they must indeed be aggressively sought out, something that is made more complicated by the fact that there are few reliable statistics on the demographics of the Deaf in general, or American Sign Language users in the United States. The lack of a written language poses a unique difficulty which prevents many from reading a written research instrument, and essentially raises the question of how reliable this form of research is? Similarly, the author was reminded of the importance of sensitivity to sign language users when conducting research by the many appreciative comments received for including links to video of the survey in American Sign Language. Communication with the Deaf in all respects brings with it particular challenges, and for the researcher the costs of obtaining sign language interpreters and translation can be prohibitive. Indeed, the elements of budget and time were perhaps the biggest limiters on the author's survey and methodology.

Given the difficulties in identifying and locating the Deaf, sampling from that population is also clearly a limiting factor. The use of fortuitous sampling is widely seen as resulting in a potential for bias (Kroll, Keer, Placek, Cyril, & Hendershot, 1997). As such, given that this particular research is based on what might be labelled a fortuitous sample of the Deaf population, it serves as another example of difficulties

associated with surveying this population. With the benefit of time and adequate funds, it will be feasible to undertake a study of a more clearly defined sample.

3.6 Methods summary

While research undertaken with the Deaf brings with it many complexities, it is felt by the author that this particular survey did result in a satisfactory sample from which to draw data and conclusions. The targets for survey respondents was set at ten and fifty respondents respectively, a reflection of anticipated difficulties in reaching larger segments of the Deaf community. This is a very small proportion of the Deaf population in the United States, and it is acknowledged that this method of sampling is not at all representative of the American Deaf population. Given that no Deaf community is alike one cannot generalize the results of this research. In as much as it arrives at hitherto undocumented conclusions, it does however provide a basis for further research. The findings of the survey are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the survey was to obtain a picture of the relationship between the public library and Deaf and hard of hearing people. In support of the stated objective of investigating the perceptions of the public library by the Deaf, the survey provided information on the following topics:

- Reasons why the Deaf and hard of hearing use, or do not use the public library.
- Library services which are of most, and least interest.
- Reasons for the public library being seen as both Deaf and hard of hearing friendly, and not friendly.
- Identification of other information services or sources used instead of the public library.
- How the provision of interpreters at library events, and communication with staff are factors in connecting the Deaf and hard of hearing to the public library.

4.2 Response Rate

The survey yielded a total of 65 responses. Given that a snowball sampling technique was employed a final sample size was not determined, however the minimum goal was to attain 50 responses. The characteristics of the sample are as follows.

4.2.1 Age groups of respondents

Coding No	Age group	No. of Responses
1	18-30	7
2	31-50	31
3	51-64	20
4	65 and over	7

Table 2: Age of survey respondents

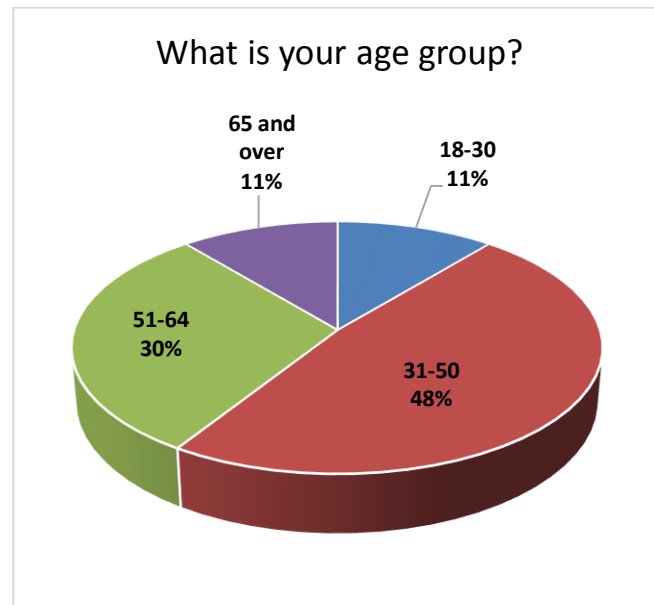


Figure 1: Age of survey respondents

The 31-50 and 51-64 age groups were most heavily represented among respondents, while at both extremes the 18-30 and 65 and over age group equally featured seven respondents.

4.2.2 As a Deaf/deaf or Hard of Hearing person, how would you describe yourself?

Coding No	Description	No of Responses
1	Deaf/Hard of Hearing from birth	48
2	Became Deaf/Hard of Hearing after age 2	15
3	Became Deaf/Hard of Hearing as an adult	2

Table 3: Stage of life when respondents hearing was lost

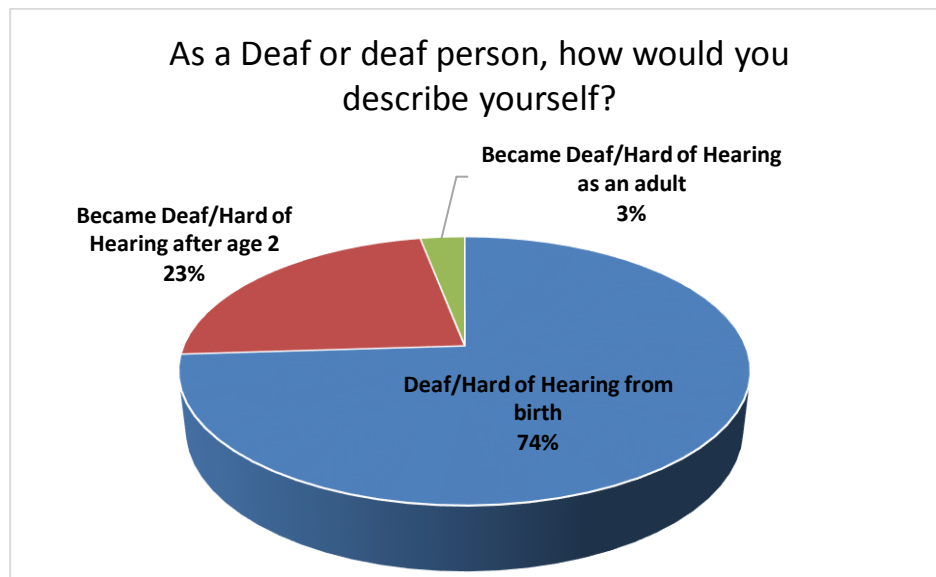


Figure 2: Stage of life when respondents hearing was lost

The clear majority of respondents described themselves as Deaf from birth. Ten of the respondents described themselves as being hard of hearing.

4.2.3 How do you communicate one-on-one with people who do not sign?

Coding No	Communication type	No of Responses
1	Writing	53
2	Speech	26
3	Texting or instant messaging	40

Table 4: Preferred method of communicating with people who do not sign

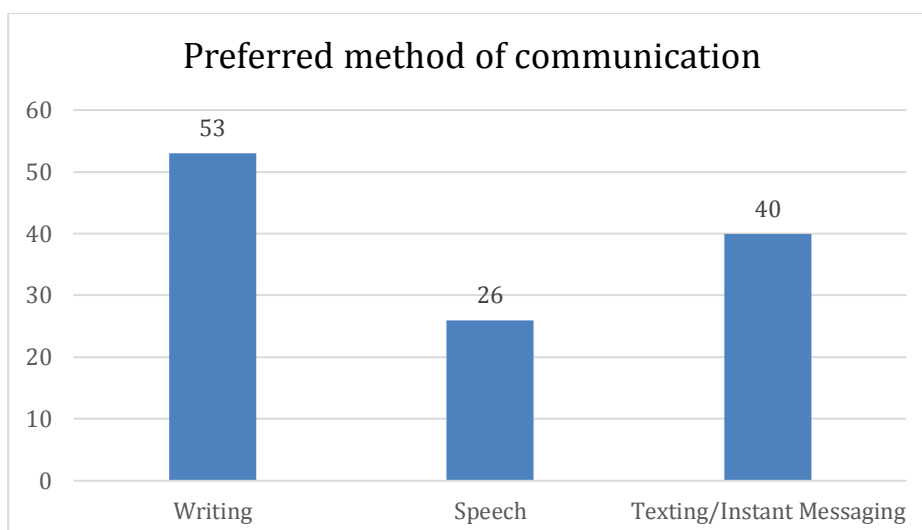


Figure 3: Preferred method of communicating with people who do not sign

Respondents could give more than one answer to this question. Over three-quarters of respondents communicate in writing with people who do not use sign language.

Texting or Instant Messaging and speech are also popular.

4.2.4 What is the most comfortable way for hearing people to communicate with you?

Coding No	Communication type	No of Responses
1	American Sign Language	42
2	Writing	39
3	Speech	13
4	Texting/instant messaging	29

Table 5: Respondents preferences for hearing people to communicate with them

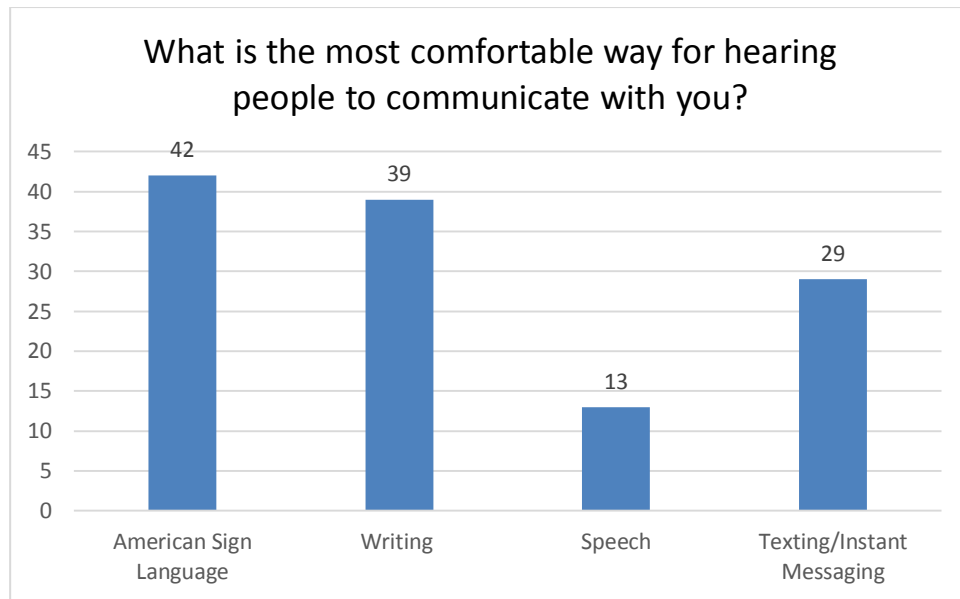


Figure 4: Respondents preferences for hearing people to communicate with them

Multiple answers to this question were also permissible. American Sign Language was seen as the most popular means of communication, with writing a very close second choice. As with the preceding question, texting or Instant Messaging and speech were the remaining choices in that order of choice.

4.3 Findings

The survey findings are summarized as follows:

4.3.1 How often do you visit a public library?

Coding No	Frequency of visits	No of Responses
1	Regularly (more than once a month)	14
2	Often (about once a month)	13
3	Rarely (a few times a year)	34
4	Never	3
5	No responses	1

Table 6: Frequency of visits to a public library

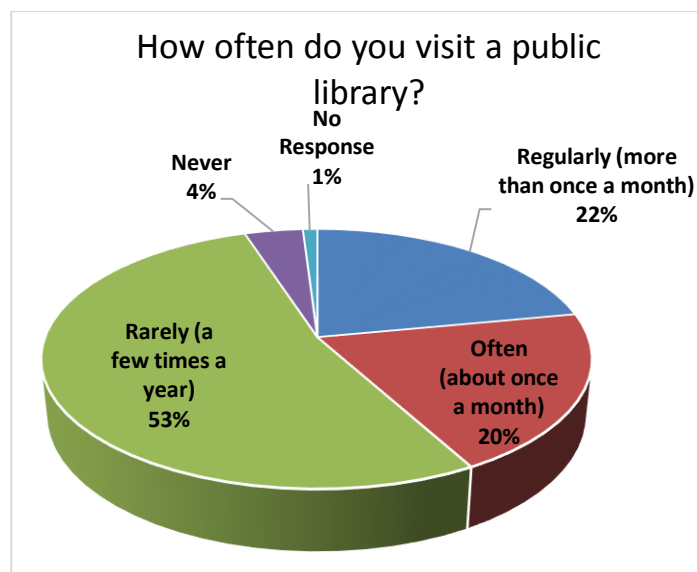


Figure 5: Frequency of visits to a public library

Indications from answers to this question suggest that there is connection, albeit perhaps a loose one to the public library. While the majority of respondents said that they visit a public library only a few times a year, a combined 42% visit either regularly, or often with only three people never visiting.

4.3.2 Why do you visit a public library?

Coding No	Reason for visit	No of Responses
1	A place to meet	5
2	Books, magazines, newspapers	36
3	DVD's	16
4	e-books	3
5	Computers	7
6	Change of environment	3
7	No cost	1
8	Events and programmes	1
9	No response	6

Table 7: Why do you visit a public library?

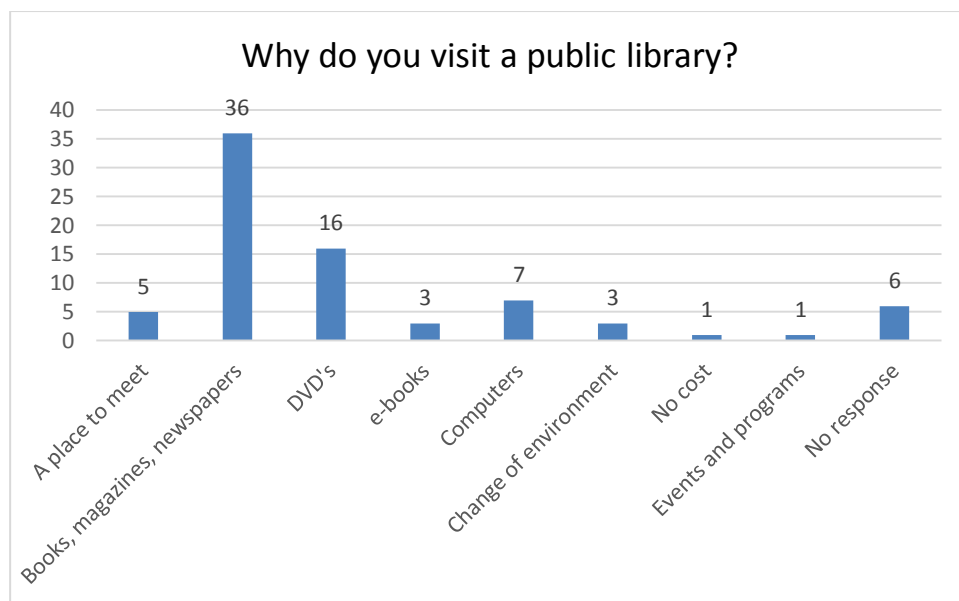


Figure 6: Why do you visit a public library?

This open question sought to expand on the previous question by learning what brings respondents to the public library. The responses indicate that aspects of the collection are a leading factor, particularly books, magazines, and newspapers with DVD's being the second place category. Computer use was the third most popular reason given. The merit of the public library as a place to meet, and the significance of the public library environment are factors which appear amongst these answers; the significance of both becomes apparent in subsequent answers. With only one respondent indicating library programming, it is evident that programming and events do not bring the Deaf to the public library.

4.3.3 Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people? If yes, how many times have you met up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the library in the past 6 months?

Coding no	A good place to meet up?	No of responses
1	Yes	28
2	No	37

Table 8: Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf & Hard of Hearing people?

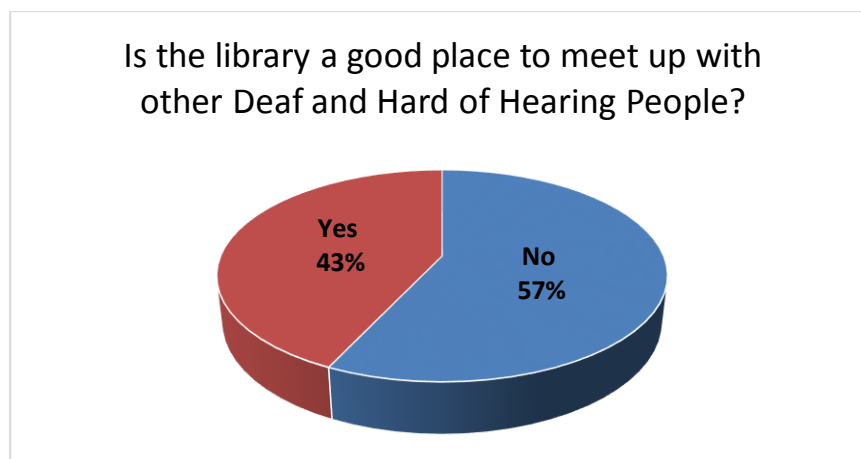


Figure 7: Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf & Hard of Hearing people?

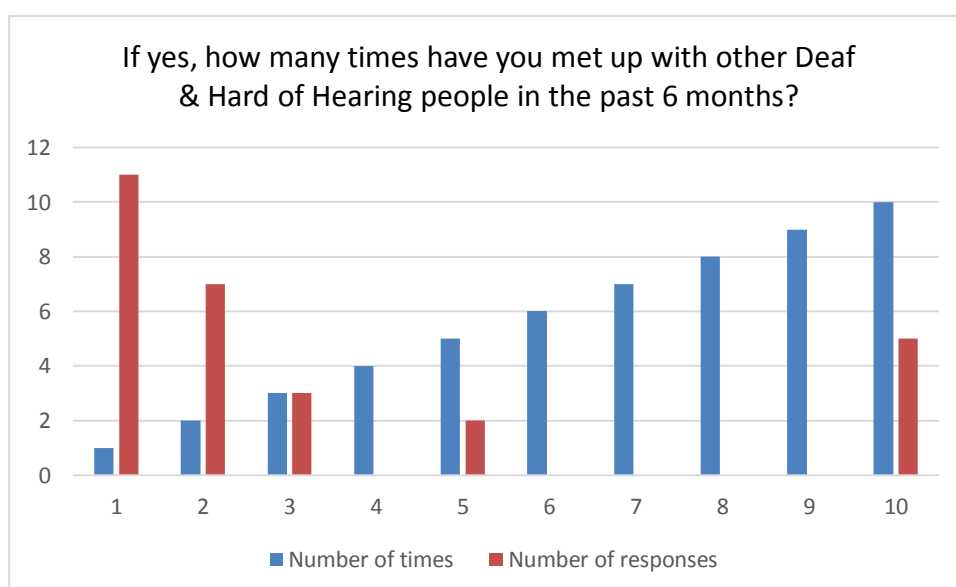


Figure 8: How many times have you met up with other Deaf & Hard of Hearing people in the library within the past 6 months?

Thirty seven out of the sixty five respondents said that the public library is not a good place to meet up. Of the twenty eight people who said yes, it is a good place to meet up with other Deaf and hard of hearing people, eighteen further said that they had used the public library only once or twice as a place to meet within the past six months, although five respondents said that they had done so on ten or more occasions.

4.3.4 Do you use other services, or sources, such as the internet, to locate information instead of public libraries?

Coding No	Do you use other information sources?	No of Responses
1	No	22
2	Yes	43

Table 9: Extent to which other information services or sources are used instead of public libraries

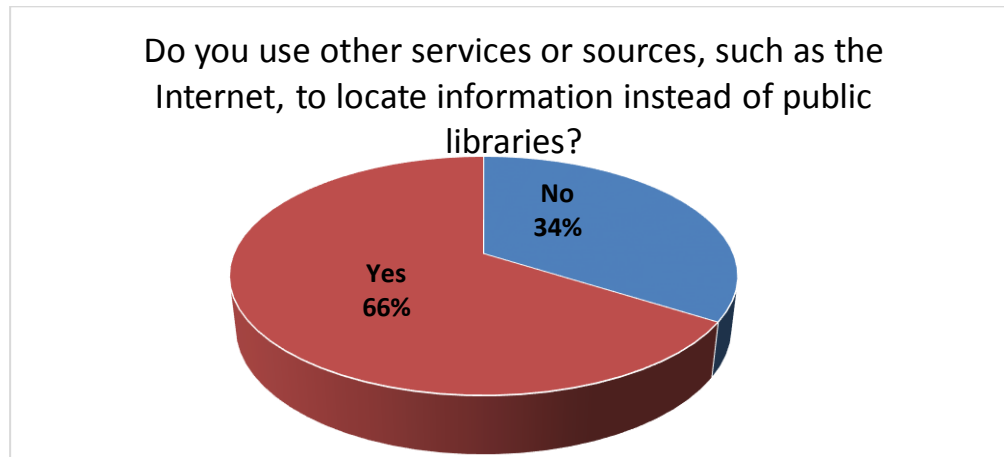


Figure 9: Extent to which other information services or sources are used instead of public libraries

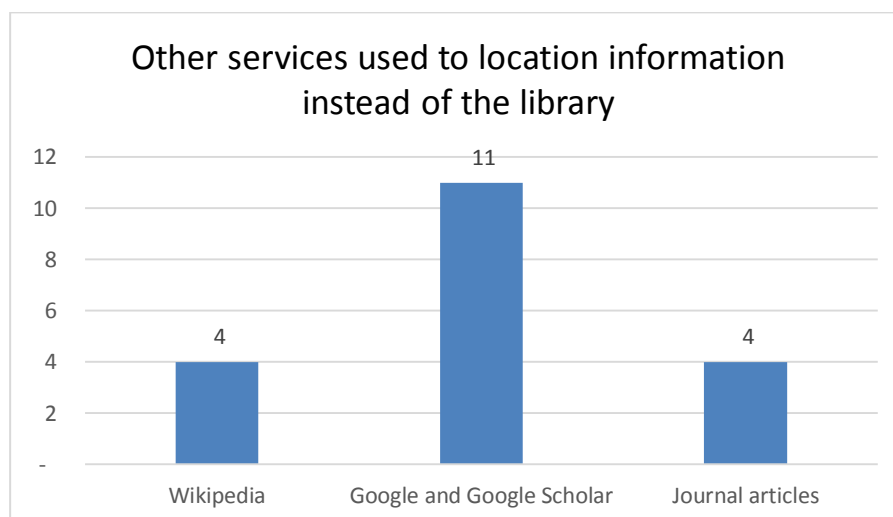


Figure 10: Other information services used instead of the public library

The aim of the question was to investigate whether Deaf communities in particular are using alternative resources other than the public library for their information needs.

43 people said that they did, and of all of those indicated that electronic resources are preferred alternatives, for speed and ease of access. Over a quarter of respondents however said that they do not use alternative sources of information.

4.3.5 Do you consider the public library to be a Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

Coding no	Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly?	No of responses
1	No	29
2	Yes	35
3	No response	1

Table 10: Is the public library a Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

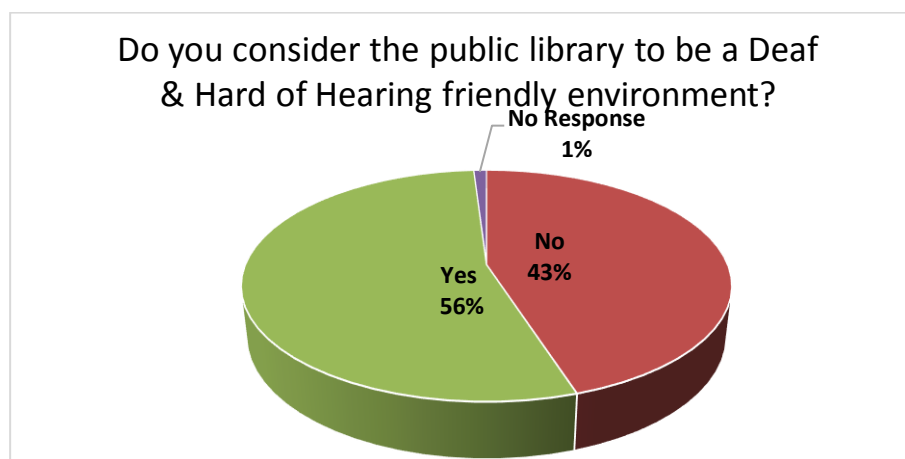


Figure 11: Is the public library a Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

The result from this question was a close one, with a slim majority believing that the public library does provide a friendly environment. This question provides an interesting comparison to the previous one concerning preferences for using the public library as a place to meet up (4.3.3).

4.3.6 List 3 reasons why it is Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly, and 3 reasons why it is not Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly?

Coding No	Reasons for being a friendly environment	No of Responses
1	Access to computers	5
2	DVD's with captions	4
3	Self service borrowing	3
4	Can talk via Sign Language & not disturb	3
5	Deaf literature collections	4
6	Videophone provision	5
7	Programming with Sign language interpreters	8
8	Open spaces	10
9	Wi-fi	2
10	Private meeting rooms & privacy	16
11	Open access & no barriers to use	12
12	Building well lit & not crowded	15
13	Visibly pleasing –good signage	18
14	Employees who Deaf or know Sign Language	22
15	Easy to communicate with pencil & paper	12
16	No response	6

Table 11: Reasons why the public library is Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly

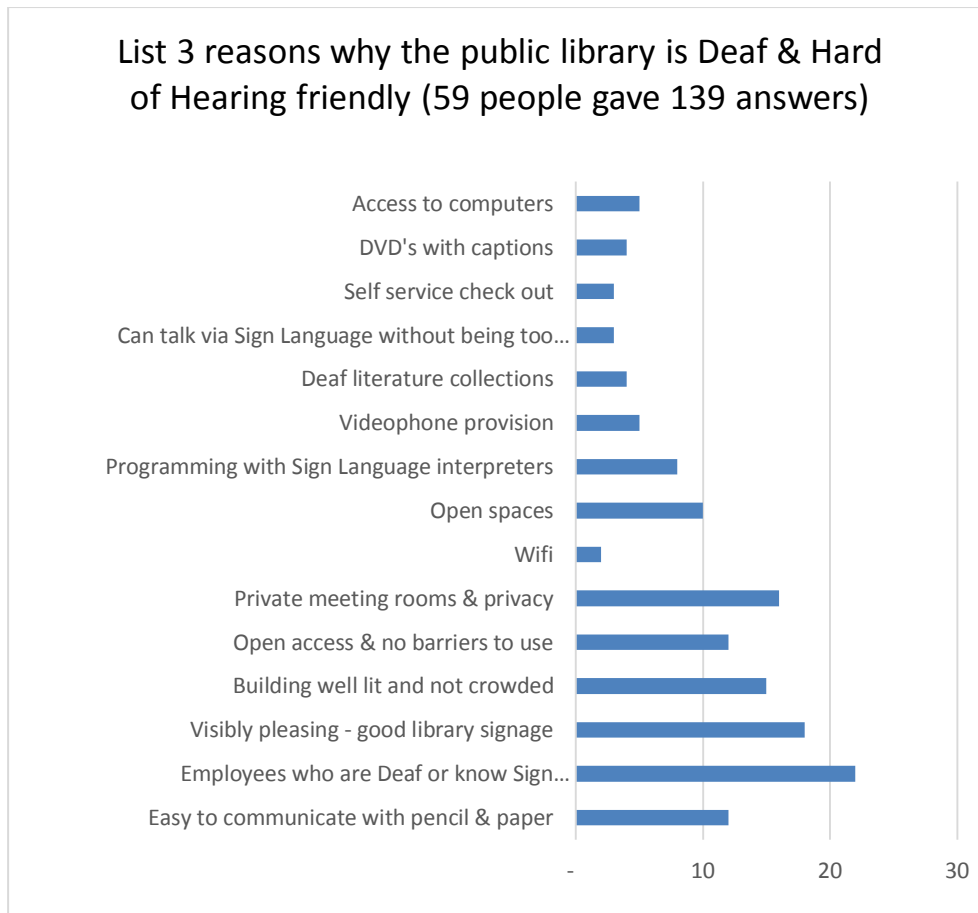


Figure 12: Reasons why the public library is Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly

With respondents asked to give up to three open reasons for both viewpoints, the aim again here was to understand in more detail whether there are particular aspects of the public library which are particularly relevant to the Deaf and Deaf culture and thereby have a bearing on use. The answers were wide ranging in both cases. It is apparent that ease of communication with library staff (and it must also be noted, by using self service machines for issuing of items), as well as provision of sign language interpreters for events makes a significant difference in how the public library is viewed, as is building design. Provision of captioned DVD's and Deaf literature resources are two aspects of a collection that are of importance in this respect as well.

Coding no	Reasons for not being a friendly environment	No of Responses
1	Lack of staff knowledge of Sign Language	24
2	Sign Language interpretation not offered for events	20
3	Hard to know whether being too loud	5
4	Few events of interest to Deaf community	10
5	DVD's not captioned	14
6	No Deaf literature collections	19
7	No public videophones	6
8	Lack of Deaf friendly spaces in building	12
9	Poor lighting	10
10	Poor signage	9
11	No flashing fire alarm	1
12	No responses	6

Table 12: Reasons why the public library is not Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly

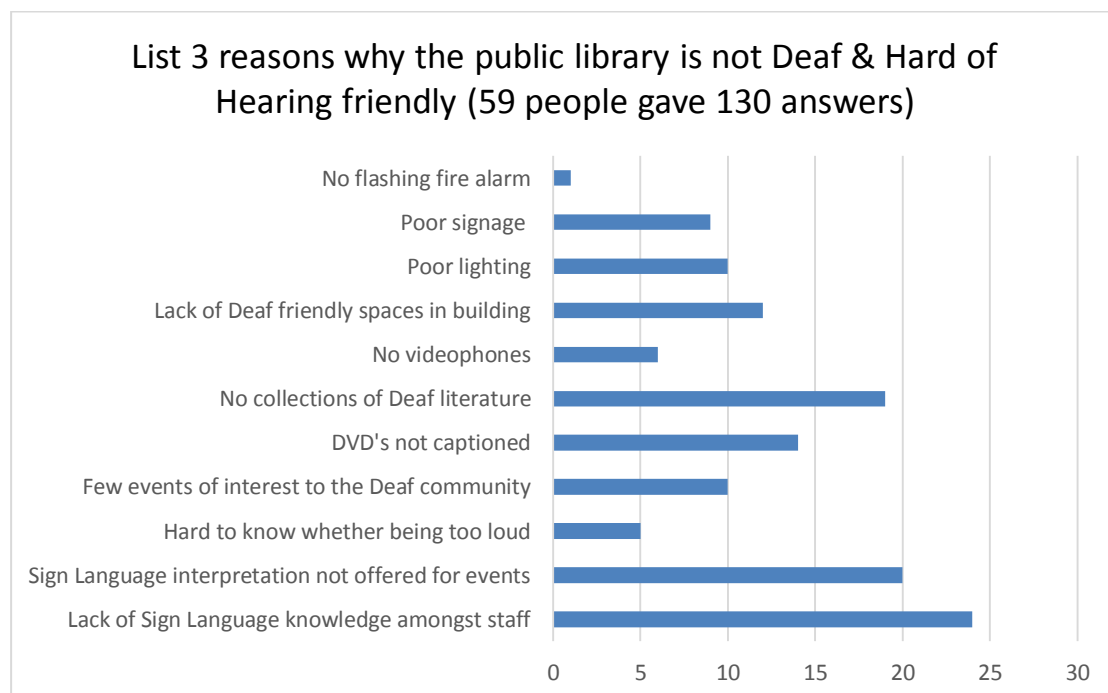


Figure 13: Reasons why the public library is not Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly

Conversely, public libraries lacking in the above-mentioned areas appear to influence perceptions of why the public library is not a friendly place. Communication concerns, either with hearing staff or the lack of interpreters for events proved to be the most popular concerns, while difficulties with the building, either in terms of lighting or what is seen as lack of Deaf friendly space were of particular concern. Similarly to the first part of this question, the importance of providing a collection of materials to the Deaf was shown. The lack of captioned DVD's and Deaf literature was mentioned as an answer 14 and 19 times respectively.

4.3.7 What public library services would interest you the most?

Coding No	What services are of most interest?	No of Responses
1	Lending of books	45
2	Children's services & events	24
3	Research & databases	33
4	e-books	21
5	DVD's	31
6	Computers	24
7	Videophones	22
8	Programmes for adults	21
9	Community information	24
10	Providing a Deaf literature collection	36

Table 13: Public library services of most interest

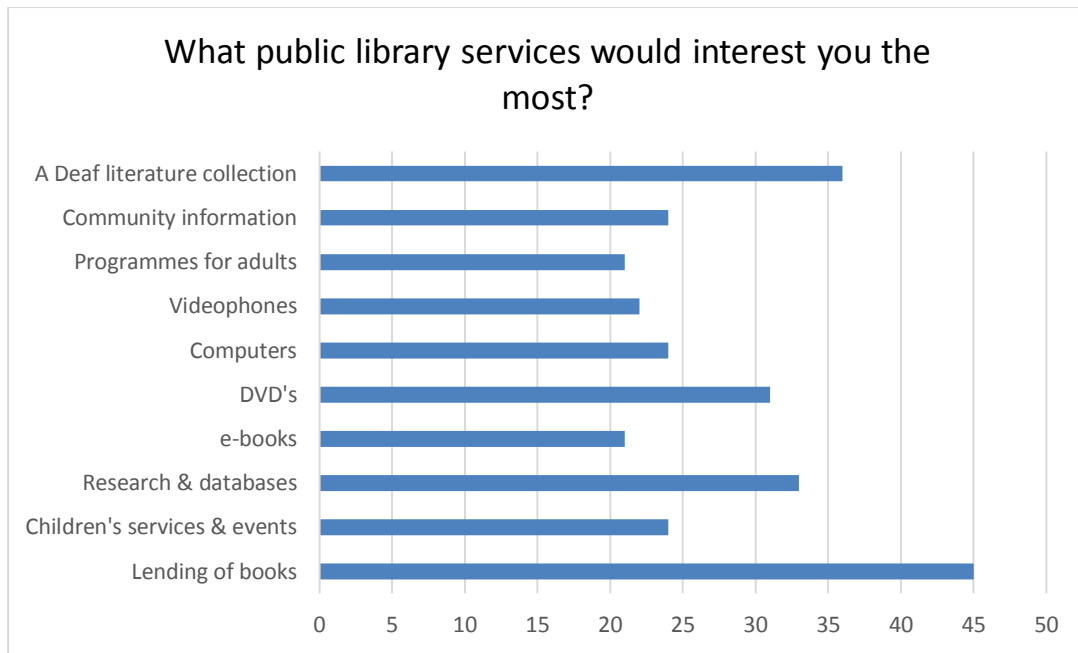


Figure 14: Public library services of most interest

In a question offering a comparison with the above-mentioned one asking why people visit the public library, the collection aspect once again features prominently. Services of most interest are lending of books and DVD's, while the second most popular choice was that of a Deaf literature collection itself. The role of the public library as information provider is clearly still in evidence given that the third most selected option was that of research and databases, and 24 respondents were interested in the provision of community information. Least popular services were e-books and programming, and subsequent questions offer further insights into these two categories.

4.3.8 Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library?

Coding No	Aware of e-books	No of Responses
1	No	32
2	Yes	33

Table 14: Extent of awareness of e-book availability from a local library

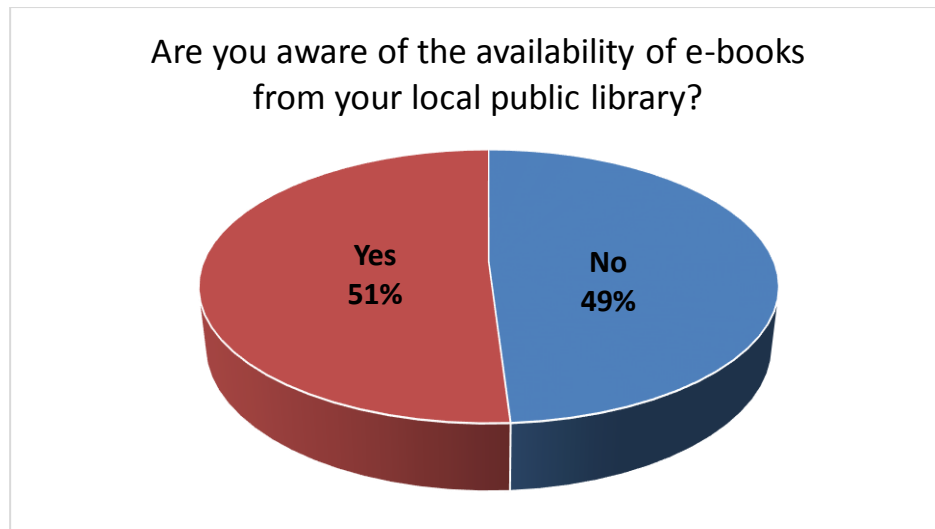


Figure 15: Extent of awareness of e-book availability from a local library

Out of all of the survey questions, this provided the closest answer with almost as many people being unaware of e-book availability, as being aware.

4.3.9 How often do you use e-books from your library?

Coding No	Frequency of e-book use	No of Responses
1	Regularly (more than once a month)	4
2	Often (about once a month)	5
3	Rarely (a few times s year)	14
4	Never	19
5	No response	23

Table 15: Frequency of e-book use from a local library?

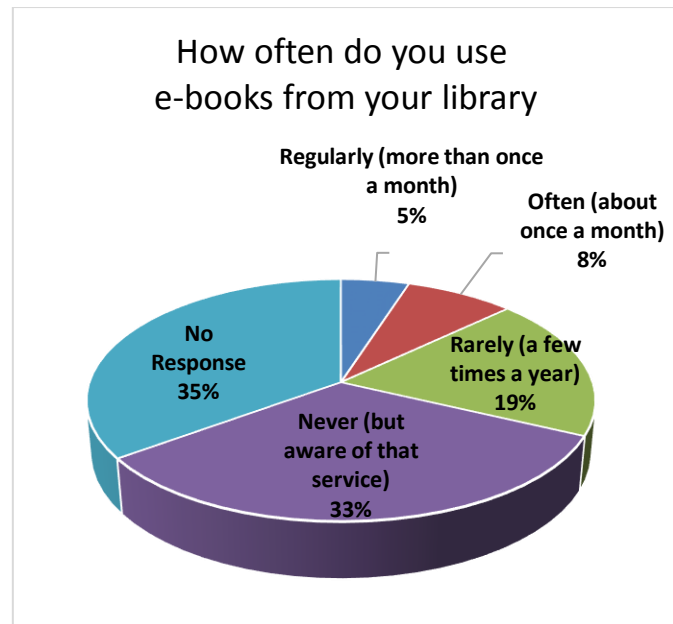


Figure 16: Frequency of e-book use from a local library?

Of those who answered yes to the question above, most suggested that there they use e-books minimally. The numbers for those who use them either rarely or never suggest little overall engagement with the e-book.

4.3.10 How often do you visit your local public library's web site?

Coding No.	Frequency of public library web site visits	No. of Responses
1	Regularly (more than once a month)	8
2	Often (about once a month)	12
3	Rarely (a few times a year)	30
4	Never	14
5	No response	1

Table 16: Frequency of visits to a local public library's web site

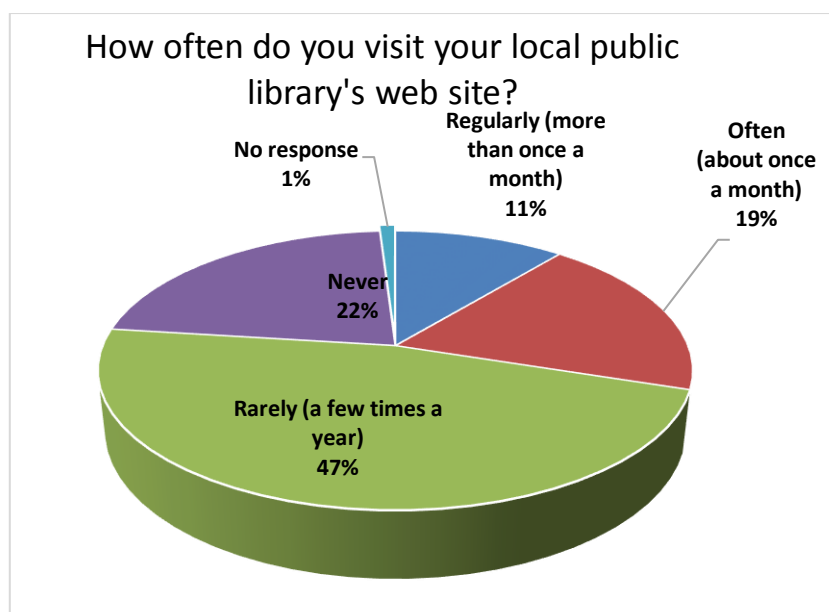


Figure 17: Frequency of visits to a local public library's web site

As with the earlier question about in-person visits, most respondents rarely visit a library web site, however a greater proportion never visit a web site. Eight out of sixty four respondents regularly visit their library's web site.

4.3.11 How many times have you attended community library events that were ASL interpreted or that had CART services within the past year? Did these events meet your needs? Why or why not?

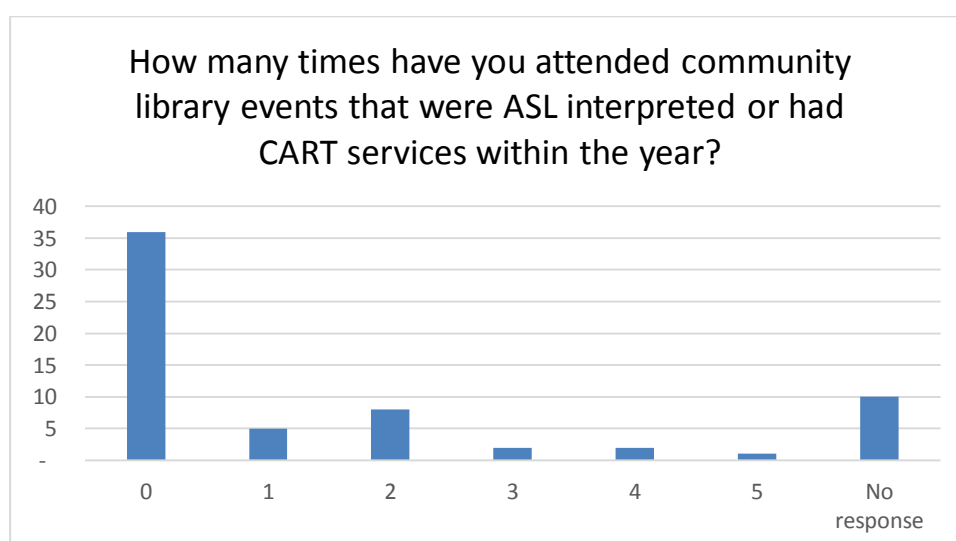


Figure 18: Frequency of attendance at library events incorporating Sign Language interpretation or CART services within the past year

When attending a community library event that was ASL interpreted or had CART services, did these accomodations meet your needs?

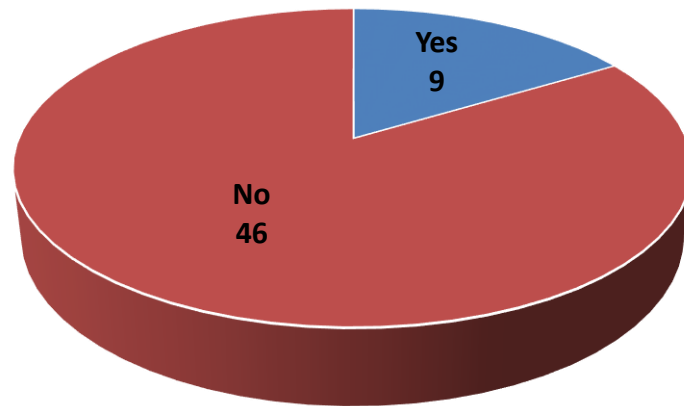


Figure 19: Did programmes which included interpretation and/or CART captions meet your needs?

Coding No.	Reasons why library events did/did not meet needs	No. of Responses
1	Did – helpful seating in large auditorium	2
2	Did – interpreters provided upon request	8
3	Did not – no interpreter or CART offered	29
4	Did not – no advertising to Deaf community	22

Table 17: Reasons why interpreted needs were/were not met

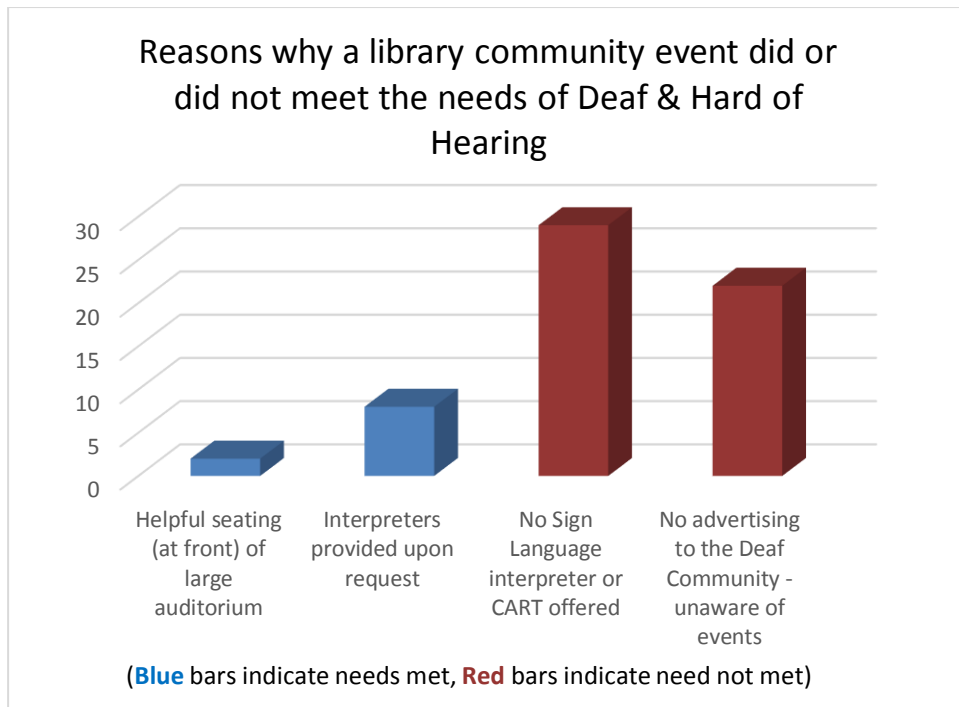


Figure 20: Reasons why interpreted needs were/were not met

The aim of this multi-part question was to investigate the extent of the provision of captioned and/or interpreted services, the extent to which such services are utilised, and needs met. Thirty six out of fifty five respondents indicated no attendance at such events, while thirteen said they had attended once or twice. Only nine people said that their needs were met because of interpreter provision. However for most others needs were unmet either because the option of having interpreters did not exist, or they felt unaware of them or events in general.

4.3.12 If your local library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?

Coding No.	Would you visit more often?	No. of Responses
1	No	16
2	Yes	47
3	No response	2

Table 18: If your local library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?

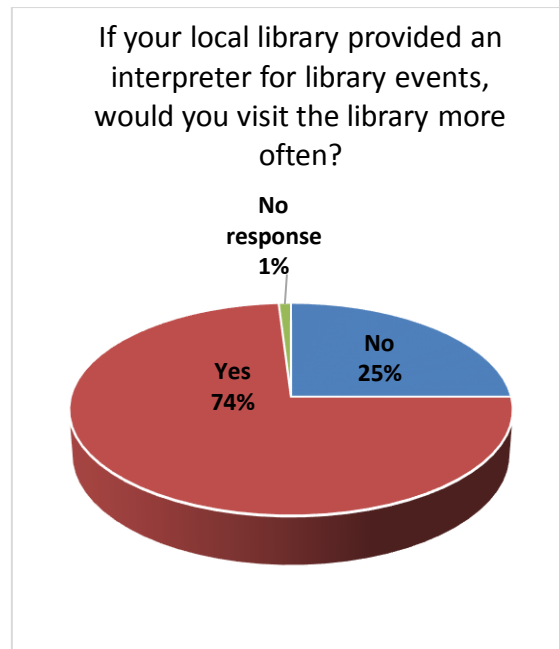


Figure 21: If your local library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?

This elaborated the previous question and discover the extent to which provision of interpreters for library visits would impact on Deaf people's attendance at a public library. An overwhelming number said that such provision would result in them visiting more often. One quarter however, said that it would not make a difference.

4.3.13 How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?

Coding No.	Suggestions for improvement	No. of Responses
1	Directly inform Deaf community about events	14
2	Provide Sign Language interpreters	14
3	Have staff learn sign language & employ more Deaf	8
4	Install public videophones	2
5	Purchase more Deaf related materials	7
6	Purchase more captioned video materials	10
7	No response	19

Table 19: How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?

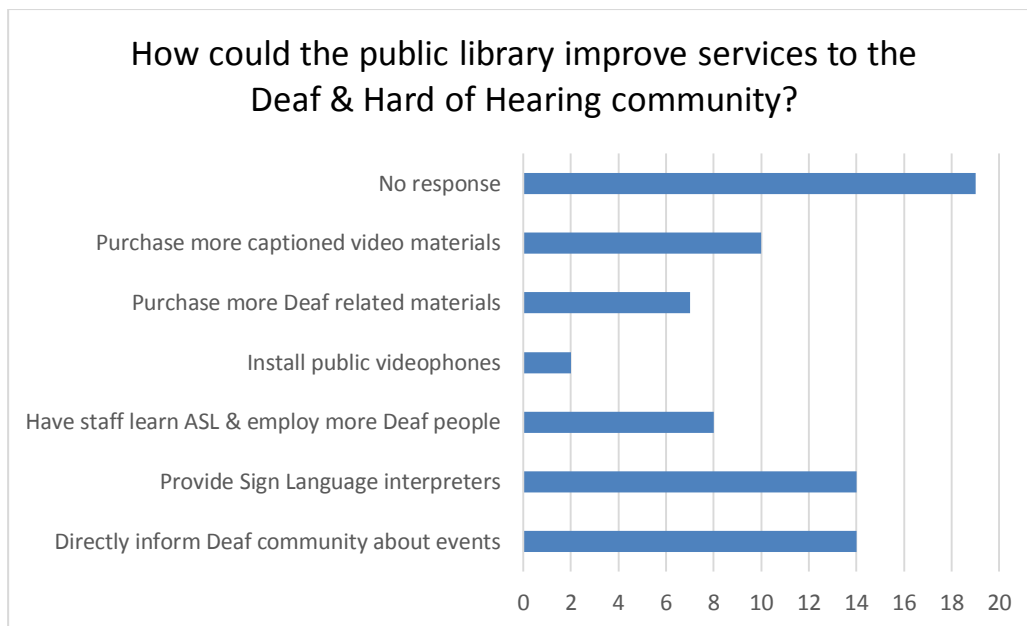


Figure 22: How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?

The final question asked respondents in their own words for their suggestions as to how the public library can improve services to the Deaf and hard of hearing.

Interestingly, this question attracted the greatest number of no responses. From the answers that were received, communication appears to be the key, in terms of having interpreted events, library staff trained in sign language, and better channels of communication with Deaf communities in general. As was evident in answers to previous questions, provision of a library collection which caters to Deaf needs is also seen as a means of improvement.

4.3.14 Age of respondents *and* frequency of public library visits

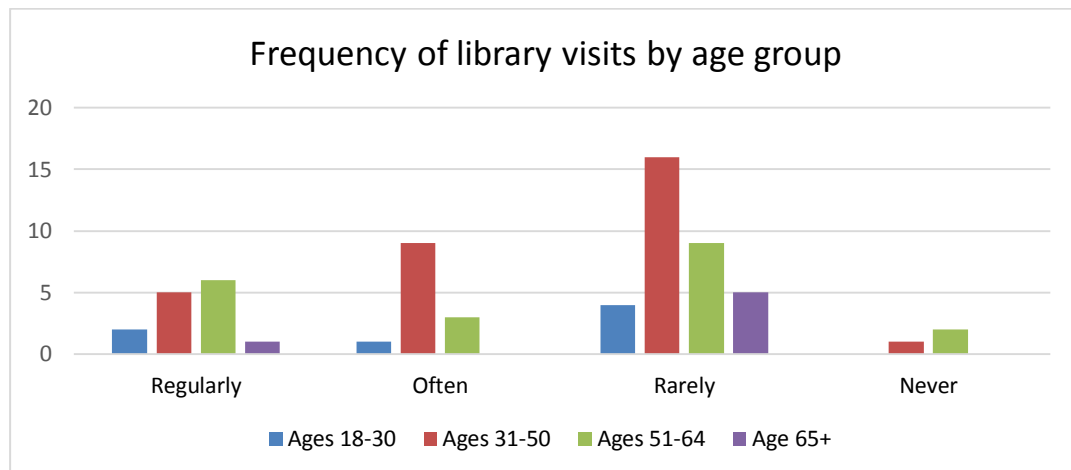


Figure 23: Frequency of public library visits by age group

A breakdown of library visits by age shows that in all four age groups most of those surveyed rarely visit the library. Although the number of respondents in the 18-30 and 65 and over categories was relatively small, it is interesting to note that none indicated that they never attend the library. The most regular visitors are the 51-64 age group.

4.3.15 Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf & Hard of Hearing people *and* do you consider the public library to be a Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

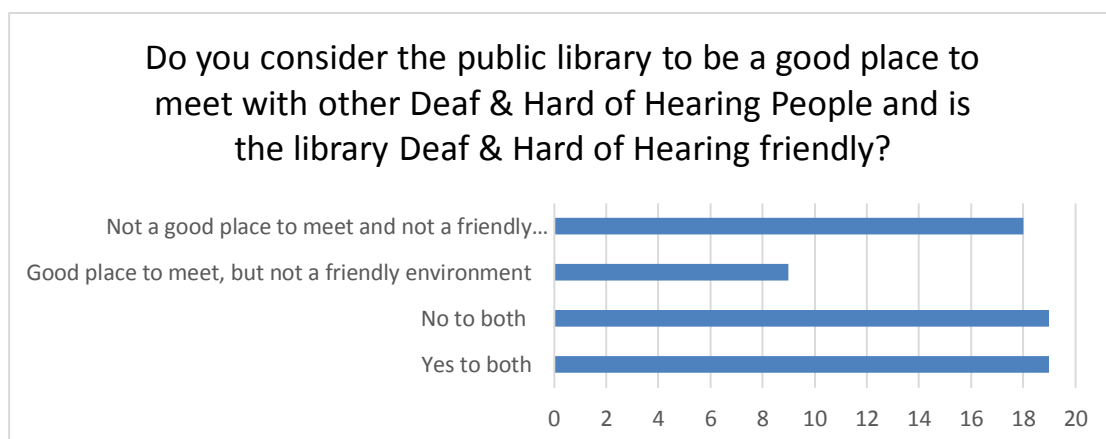


Figure 24: Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf & Hard of Hearing people *and* do you consider the public library to be a Deaf & Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

Cross-analysis of these two questions shows that while there is consistency with numbers of respondents who answered yes or no to both questions a significant number also said that the library is not a good place to meet up, but is a Deaf friendly environment.

4.3.16 Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library *and* how often do you visit your local public library's web site?

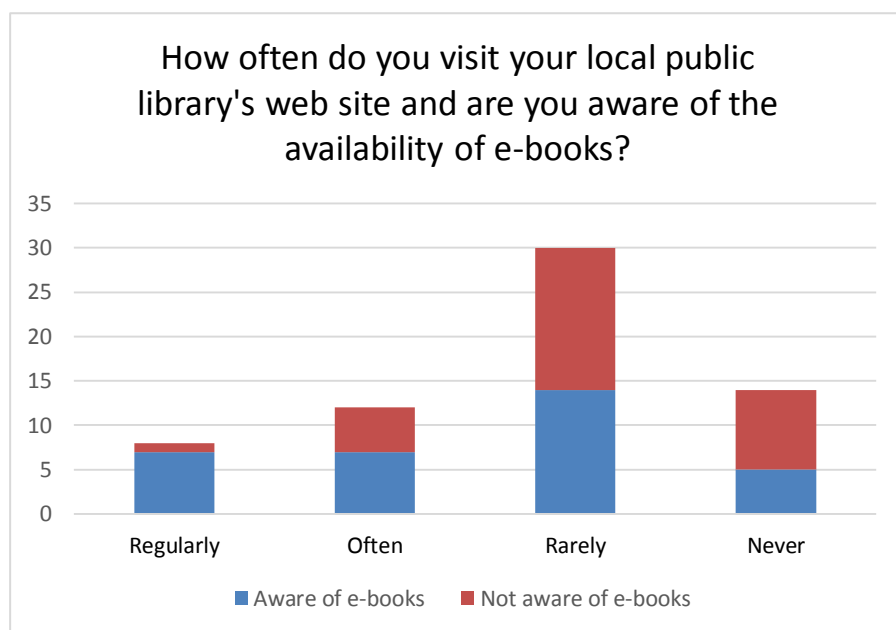


Figure 25: How often do you visit your local public library's web site and are you aware of the availability of e-books?

This cross-analysis, examining possible connections between awareness of e-book services and visits to library web sites shows that those who visit such web sites regularly or often are more likely to be aware of e-books.

4.3.17 As a Deaf or deaf person how would you describe yourself *and* what public library services would interest you the most?

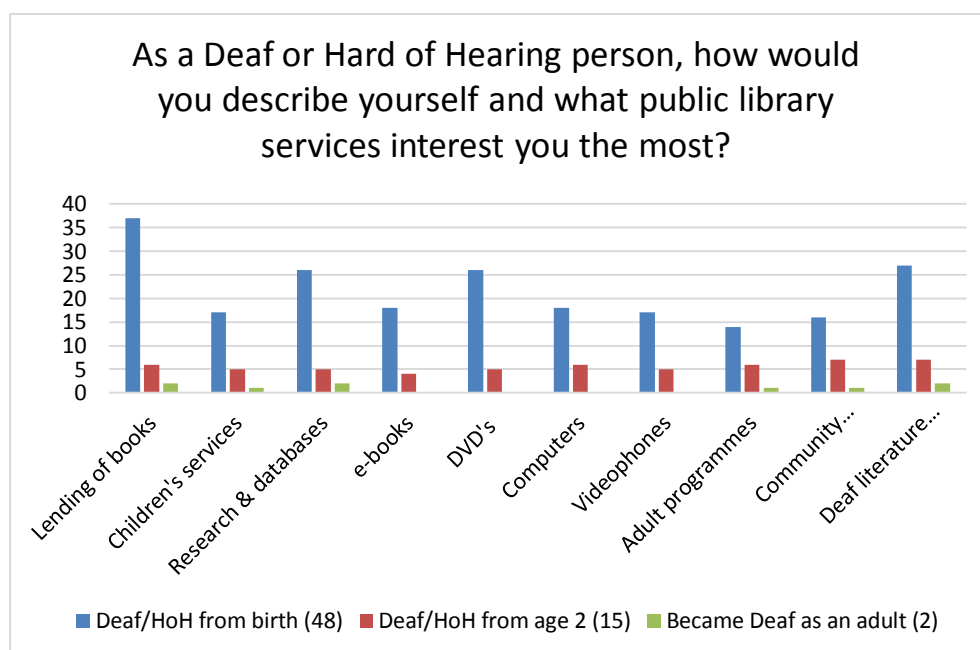


Figure 26: As a Deaf or deaf person how would you describe yourself *and* what public library services would interest you the most?

The aim of this cross-analysis is to examine the relationship between different literacy levels among the Deaf and library services of interest. Despite the fact that those who are prelingually Deaf or Hard of Hearing from birth are more likely to have lower literacy skills than those who became postlingually Deaf after the age of two and the acquisition of speech and language patterns, the priorities for library services in both groups was essentially the same with interest in borrowing books and having a deaf literature collection being leading categories. Likewise the public library as a provider of resources for research is very important for both.

4.3.18 How often do you visit a public library *and* if your public library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit more often?

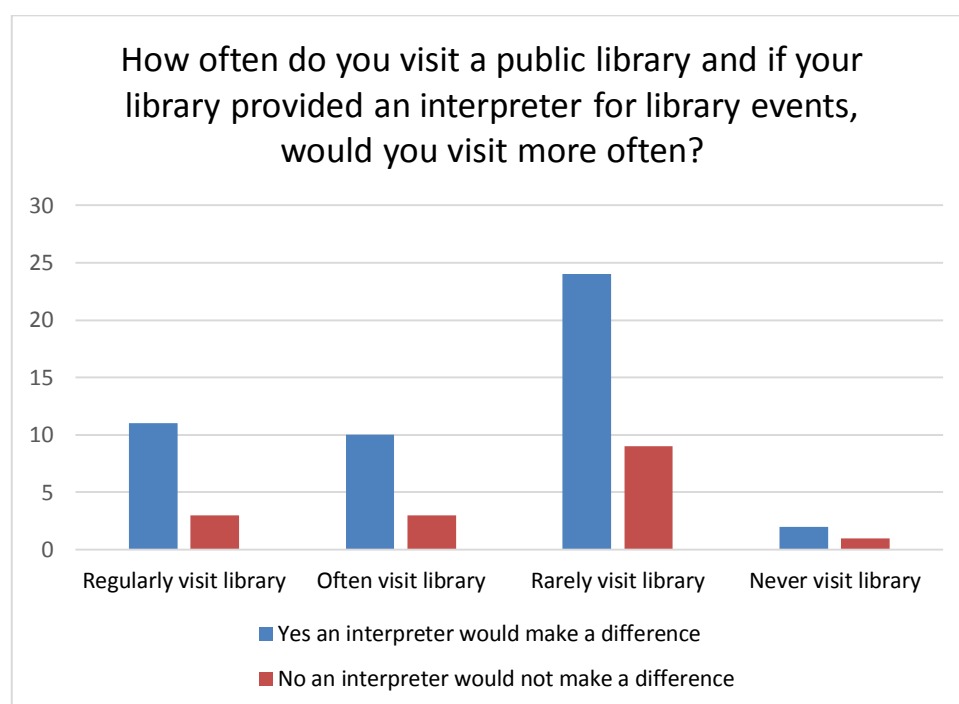


Figure 27: How often do you visit a public library *and* if your public library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit more often?

All four categories of library visit showed that the introduction of interpreters would have a positive effect on future visits, although the sentiment is clearly not universal and a number of respondents in each visit category indicated that it would not make any difference to their frequency of visits.

4.4 Summary Findings

With no evidence of any published studies of public library use by the Deaf there is no comparable research upon which to base the results of this study against. The findings however do show some interesting similarities and differences from aspects of the literature review mentioned in chapter 2, and these will be discussed further in chapter 5.

The overall picture that emerges from the survey is one of Deaf community members not heavily engaged with the public library, but on the other hand not entirely disconnected from it either. The relationship is one beset with frustrations felt by the Deaf in a number of different areas, but ones which fall under one heading, namely communication.

In-person visits to the library are for most respondents rare. Given the survey definition of rare, this perhaps amounts to a few visits annually, while library web site visits do not fare any better, although a comparison of the two shows that the number of Deaf people who have absolutely no contact with the public library through in-person visits is small indeed. A larger proportion have no contact at all through a web site. A breakdown of visits by age shows in all four categories of age, the predominant frequency of visit is that of 'rarely'. The over 65's appear to be the least connected, while conversely the 18-30's are proportionately most connected. The many faceted roles of the public library are evident among answers given as to why the Deaf do use the library, however it is apparent that most in-person visits are related to use of the collection, either through borrowing or in the library. While the traditional physical book is a significant connector between the Deaf and their reasons for using the public library, the e-book is not. Indeed, cross examination of the reasons given for visiting a public library and the stage of life when the respondent became Deaf shows that the prelingually Deaf from birth are just as interested in the lending of books and Deaf literature collections as those who became Deaf after accumulating some language skill.

The barriers between the Deaf and the public library are visible. Frustrations with trying to communicate with hearing library staff are made clear, as is the widespread lack of provision for Sign Language or captioned translations of library events. Equally damaging to the relationship are communication difficulties which appear in perhaps more subtle ways. Library building design and poor lighting can impair the ability to communicate between themselves or the hearing, either through sign language, lip reading, or pencil and paper passed back and forth. It is for this reason that the public library is seen as an unfavourable meeting place for Deaf people, on the other hand, interestingly a slight majority of respondents see the public library as a friendly environment. Combining both sets of data indicates that while there is much consistency between those who replied 'yes' and 'no' to both questions on favourability as a meeting place and the environment, an almost equal number felt that the public library was not a good place to meet up with others but yes, it offers a sympathetic environment. An important indication here is that the public library can enjoy a fruitful relationship with the Deaf.

The survey showed considerable interest in Deaf collections of materials and provision of such collections is seen as one of the ways in which services to the Deaf and hard of hearing can be improved. Clearly echoing the theme of communication, other ways in which service and relations can be improved are by having more Sign Language and Deaf library staff, offering more interpreted events, and building stronger connections with Deaf communities themselves. Just providing an interpreter for events would lead to an increase in visits across all of the age groups, although within each age group there are also those for whom it would evidently make no difference as to their library attendance.

With the communication barriers noted above and elsewhere in this dissertation, the aspect of e-book awareness and usage was an important element of the survey.

Almost as many respondents are not aware of e-book availability as are aware, however most respondents never or rarely use them (in that order). Those who make regular visits to a library website are most likely to be aware of the availability of e-books although even amongst those who rarely or never visit a website there is a reasonable awareness.

Overall the survey provided a number of interesting observations and discussion points and these will be reviewed in greater detail in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

It was noted in the introduction to the literature review of this dissertation that the great majority of literature on the topic of libraries (of any kind) and the Deaf has emanated not from the Deaf themselves, but rather from the hearing. As evidenced in chapter two, the key players in the discussion, the Deaf have had little say in how they are portrayed or how they are served anywhere in the library literature. It is reasonable to conclude from the literature that the relationship between the two parties, the library and the Deaf is what might be called an uneven one. In order to address the first objective of this study, relating to facets of the relationship, it is necessary to assess how happy or unhappy it is. The survey instrument's purpose was to serve as a means of taking the pulse of the relationship between the public library and the Deaf, by something which does not appear to have been done (and published) in this manner. In doing so, it also illustrates the sensitivities that must be observed if the Deaf are to be sought after to be equal partners in this relationship.

The author embarked on this research with the overarching aim being to examine the gap in information so far as public libraries and the Deaf are concerned, that gap being the lack of input and voice from the Deaf. From this examination, the desired outcome was to be able to obtain an illustration of this relationship through the lens of the Deaf. The intriguing statement by the Deaf librarian Karen McQuigg, included in chapter 1 as being the starting point for this research is noted once again:

Not only are the deaf not on the agendas of public librarians but anecdotal evidence suggests that the situation is mutual...

(McQuigg, 2003, p. 367)

While no evidence of any comparable surveys or studies to the one carried out for this dissertation can be found it can be said that the results do provide a desired lens and illustration of the relationship and the question as to whether it is of a one way, or two way nature, or not one at all. In undertaking the survey and arriving at its subsequent conclusions the relationship that is depicted does successfully meet the objectives stated in chapter one. A discussion of the survey findings follows.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The dominant theme appearing in chapter two and the literature review is that by virtue of the characteristics associated with Deafness, connecting with the Deaf and their culture is difficult and challenging. Low literacy levels and the use of a unique and culturally predominant sign language which allows those who use it to be expressive with each other, but not in the language of English, do not, we are told lead to the Deaf being natural library users. When one in addition takes into consideration the noted Deaf cultural values that are deemed to contribute to a Deaf and hearing divide, the picture is even more complicated.

Question one of the survey sought to establish an answer to the basic question of just how much are the Deaf connected to the public library given the characteristics suggested above. The overall results suggest that while there is not a vibrant connection between the two, on the other hand neither is the public library totally off the agenda of the Deaf. These answers would appear to counter the suggestion that the public library is often viewed as just one more institution which is of little interest or use to the Deaf (Wright & Davie, 1989), although it is recognized that this view is somewhat dated. In-person visits to the library largely mirror the frequency of visits

to a library web site. This suggests that where work can be done in terms of linking a public library to its Deaf community it needs to address both points of connection. Given the unbalanced age levels within the survey sample it is hard to draw any meaningful conclusions as to how much age makes a difference in library use, except to highlight the fact that the two most interesting age groups at either side of the spectrum, the 18-30's and the over 65's showed contrasting levels of engagement. All but one of the over 65 respondents rarely visit the public library while three of the seven 18-30's regularly or often visit. Those most likely to have been educated in Deaf schools where the library was used as the venue for detention and the consequent negative connotations are the over 65's (Hagemeyer, 1992). The suggested negative connotations may be substantiated by the survey findings. The potential for a deeper analysis of these two groups is clear.

Having asked whether the Deaf visit a public library, question two asked why they do so. The aim of having an open ended question was to offer, as much as possible the opportunity for the Deaf to express in their own words what brings them to use the library as they do. It is from this, and allied questions that several distinct patterns emerge relating to use and non-use.

The first of these relates to library collections. While no distinction was made in the survey between borrowing materials and using them in the library, it is clear that a significant attachment to the public library comes as a result of its collections. Books, magazines, and newspapers were given as the single most important reason as to why the library was visited. Question seven asking (with closed answers) which library services are of most interest saw a similar result with lending of books coming up as

the top choice. A more specific interest however is discernable in the shape of Deaf literature and in the number of respondents who indicate a preference for such collections. The important point to be taken here is that when asked why they visit a public library, respondents indicated that they do because of books, but no mention at all was made of Deaf literature. Four out of sixty five respondents said Deaf literature collections contribute to their perception of the public library as a Deaf friendly environment. In contrast, questions seven, and thirteen (asking how the public library can improve services) saw meaningful mentions of Deaf literature. Furthermore the absence of a deaf literature collection is the third most heavily cited reason for the public library not being a friendly environment in question six. Noted in the literature review as a growing and distinct genre (Rutherford, 1988; Holcomb, 2013), the survey echoes the popularity of Deaf literature collections but suggests that they are not found in sufficient number in public libraries.

Above all else however these results are interesting when measured against the backdrop of a Deaf population widely labelled as naturally possessing a handicap to reading given the difficulties in speech language development (Dalton, 1985; Wright & Davie, 1989; McDaniel, 1992; McQuigg, 2003; Playforth, 2004). Cross analysis of the stage of life at which respondents became Deaf, and the public library services of most interest to them showed that regardless of whether Deafness resulted at birth or sometime after age two (and the acquisition of *some* language and speech), leading areas of interest were to be found in both the lending of books and Deaf literature collections. The challenges of selecting appropriate materials for the Deaf were highlighted in the literature review, yet the popularity of the book suggests that building collections for the Deaf clearly is a key element in attracting the Deaf to the

public library regardless of levels of literacy and reading difficulties. The captioned DVD is an equally strong connector to the public library, a popular and integral part of any collection, and their absence in a collection is noted in question six.

The coded answers to question two can be broken down into two distinct groupings which show why, on the one hand the public library does succeed in attracting the Deaf, while at the same time hinting at those areas, (which are substantiated in the subsequent questions), where attention must be focused if the Deaf are to make use of the public library on a larger scale. The former includes the collection, as noted above, in addition to the availability of public computers. The latter relate to the public library as a place and environment, and communication within it. That public libraries are not succeeding in attracting the Deaf in greater numbers is clear from the lone affirmative mention of events and programmes in chapter 2. Just a handful use the public library as a venue to meet. This aspect is examined further in questions three and six from which the combined results offer scope for further discussion.

A slight majority do not see the public library as a good place to meet up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, yet it is seen (again by a slim majority) as a friendly environment to that population. How does one explain these two, perhaps contradictory sets of viewpoints? It is here that the answers lie with communication. Having staff who can easily converse with the Deaf because they know sign language clearly adds to the appeal of the library. The theme of communication however manifests itself in another way, namely the library as a facility, and its design. To that end, helpful signage, good lighting (to visually aid in lip reading and sign language), open spaces promoting visibility where groups of the Deaf can sit together, and the

provision of private study areas all contribute to that helpful environment ((Weir & Law, 1986; McDaniel, 1992; Jeal, DePaul Roper & Ansell, 1996; Playforth 2004; Crump, 2009; Riley, 2009), their absence as noted in question six not being conducive to one.

Just one respondent mentioned the lack of a flashing fire alarm as a factor in the library not being Deaf friendly. It's subtle mention is significant as a reminder that the many audible signals taken for granted by the hearing are no help to the Deaf unless accompanied by visual cues.

Since there was no follow-up to question three asking *why* the public library is a good place to meet up with other Deaf people, There is no definite evidence on the reasons why more people (by half) think that the public library is yes, a good place to meet, but isn't a friendly environment rather than the other way round. The aspect of the public library as a meeting place is absent in the literature. A possible explanation, however may lie in the facility and design of the building, as found in the above-mentioned literature. Positive expressions may reflect library visits where design has been helpful in facilitating good communication in terms of lighting or signage, but the experience of trying to communicate with staff is one of frustration. The degree of negative sentiment found in this area of the public library as a facility does certainly give substance to the comment found in section 2.3 by McQuigg (2003), that poor physical access and feelings of being unwelcome have made libraries particularly unappealing to Deaf users.

An additional somewhat contradictory scenario is evident from those who see the public library as a friendly environment because in using sign language they can communicate quietly and without making noise. On the other hand, in expressing concern about being too loud (and of course being unaware of it) respondents saw an opposite effect. That many Deaf people are sensitive to what they see as upsetting encounters with the hearing including stares and general hostility was noted in section 2.4 (Foster, 1989; Skelton & Valentine, 2003). The natural desire to behave quietly in the library obviously does not make the Deaf person's library experience an easy one, but does reinforce the importance of library staff handling problems with the Deaf making noise with appropriate tact and sensitivity.

It is interesting to note that comments from several survey respondents alluded to the decline and closure of many Deaf Clubs (Paddon & Humphries, 2005) and the importance of the public library substituting as a meeting place. The findings on communication with library staff reinforce the widely held belief mentioned in chapter 2 that one of the ways to achieve credibility with the Deaf community is by training staff on basic sign language and communication techniques as well as employing the Deaf in the library.

An additional, but no less significant area where the right kind of communication evidently can potentially bring the Deaf to the public library lies in the provision, or lack of it of interpretive services. Lack of sign language interpretation is the second most popular reason given for the public library being unfriendly, while only one respondent gave events and programmes as a reason for visiting the library. Over half of the respondents had not attended an interpreted library event within the past year.

Once again, the findings are a reflection of the service priorities of the Deaf (Day, 1999; Rodriguez and Reed, 2003; Playforth, 2004; Marks, 2005). It appears that respondents may have misinterpreted question eleven as asking whether programming in general meets their needs. Nonetheless the clear message is that unless sign language interpreters or captioning is provided – or the message that they can be provided is understood by the Deaf community, then there will be no connection. One interesting, and perhaps not obvious observation seen from the responses to question eleven is the importance of having seating for the Deaf at the front of the room where the interpreted event is being held. Once again, visibility and lighting are ingredients in the communication mix.

That the provision of sign language interpretation is a key to reaching the Deaf community is not surprising given the place of the language within the culture. Yet the extent to which it appears not to be doing so, is it seems a reflection of a wholesale failure to provide such services by American public libraries. This survey's findings on communication and its constituent parts noted above are all seen as requisites for a model library serving the Deaf (Plackett, 1977; Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, 1986; Weir & Law, 1986; Day, 1992; Library Association, 1992). Those findings may therefore not be novel ones, but do serve to corroborate these resources.

That said, while almost three-quarters of respondents to question twelve said that providing an interpreter for library events would result in them visiting the library more often, one-quarter suggested that it would make no difference. This latter statistic raises several issues, again with the potential for deeper and further

investigation. 25 percent feel this way, but at this point one can only speculate on the reasons why.

A further cryptic message is found in the responses to question thirteen. Designed with the aim of rounding off the survey by asking how the public library can improve services to the Deaf, it succeeded in attracting the highest no response rate in the entire survey. Again, one cannot be sure of the reasons for this. The answers that were given however, affirm that providing interpreters and educating library are again seen as important improvements, along with the previously noted collection enhancements.

One aspect of a public library's collection not previously mentioned in the literature is the e-book. With the extent of it's connection to the Deaf being unknown, this survey sought to provide some sense of usage and interest among the Deaf, on the basis that e-book usage does not necessarily involve in-person visits to the library or communication with staff. Overall the survey shows little interest in e-books either in terms of current, or potential usage. It may be speculated that finding reading level e-books might be a concern, but the fact that just under half of the respondents are unaware of e-book borrowing suggests however that the potential for connecting with the Deaf through e-books is one that remains to be more closely explored, particularly with the recent availability of bilingual bimodal e-books that have American Sign Language video and English text side by side (Mirus, 2016).

Finally, among the findings is reinforcement of the basic idea that the most important partnership for the public library is with a library's Deaf community itself (Noland, 2003; Rodriguez & Reed, 2003; Playforth, 2004; Crump, 2009). Among the reasons

given for the public library not being Deaf friendly was the lack of events of interest to the Deaf community. One might well ask, what in particular is of interest to the Deaf community that differs from a community in general? The answer could lie in establishing partnerships to find out, and serve as a means of directly informing the Deaf community of events, one of the most highly requested library improvements.

It was attempted by means of a study of the literature in section 2.4 to highlight the essential characteristics of both concepts of Deaf community, and Deaf culture, and in doing so to illustrate how both may have a bearing on a Deaf persons association with the public library. The detailed study of both concepts has its place in other disciplines and studies, and from the undertaking of this particular survey one can make only limited direct inferences. However, if there is anything to be taken away for use by the public library from the survey results in relation to Deaf community and culture it must surely be an acknowledgement of the place of Deaf literature and folklore collections, sign language and related communication, and the importance of maintaining a distinct community identity but one which does not include the label 'disabled'. It was beyond the scope of this survey to shed any meaningful light on the Deaf-hearing divide referred to in section 2.4. However overall results and comments received from the survey, while reflecting largely negative experiences and frustrations on the part of the Deaf in association with the public library, do not suggest that the public library as a symbol of the hearing world is necessarily part of such a divide.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this dissertation was to investigate the relationship between the public library and the Deaf community based on the input and of Deaf people themselves. The dissertation took as it's starting point the suggestion from Karen McQuigg, (2003) that both public librarians and the Deaf are anecdotally mutually removed, and do not appear on each others agenda. The emphasis is on the anecdotal nature of her theory. While much has been written on ways in which libraries should serve, and are serving the Deaf by hearing authors, the views of the Deaf on the public library and their user needs are consistently absent. The intention was not to attempt to definitively fill that gap. It was rather to usefully contribute to the body of knowledge on that subject by addressing that void, and the research question itself, is the public library on the agenda of the Deaf and if not, how can it find its way there?

Three objectives were targeted, and met in order to do so. The published relationships between the public library and the Deaf, and the public library's relationship to Deaf culture were identified and examined. A survey instrument was designed to investigate perceptions of the public library by the Deaf, to measure these as a factor in service provision, and from the results attained to provide public librarians with knowledge of what is needed to improve service and connections to the Deaf. Finally, through the construction of this survey, important differences in research practices and procedures involving the Deaf, rather than the hearing as participants were identified.

6.2 Conclusion

The literature review tells us that the world of the Deaf is without question one of uniqueness and diversity. Many of them have never had the experience of hearing words and have resulting limited ability to speak. Consequently reading does not come naturally to them. One of the central tenets of their world is a language based on gestures and signs which has no basis from the English language. However one may define the term 'Deaf community' no such community is alike in any shape from place to place. In a world designed for the hearing, we are told that many of the Deaf feel that they do not belong, or want to belong. They are covered in disability rights legislation and books on libraries serving the disabled, yet they do not see themselves as disabled. It is not unreasonable therefore to see those elements of uniqueness as posing significant challenges to the public library serving a Deaf community (Dalton, 1985; Berbrier, 1998; McQuigg, 2003; Skelton & Valentine, 2003, Crump, 2009).

Core values found in Deaf culture, and the practicalities of deafness also demand that undertaking research with Deaf participants requires sensitivity to ethical and factual concerns not usually found when conducting research with the hearing. Best practices identified in the literature review include consideration of potential tensions before undertaking research with Deaf subjects, wary of levels of trust confidentiality, and accuracy. Knowledge of Deaf culture and involvement with communities is seen as an absolute pre-requisite. The most basic concern however relates to the 'information gap' which naturally arises from a community where literacy levels are very low indeed, and English is often a second language (Baker-Shenk & Kyle, 1990; Pollard Jr, 2002; Harris, Holmes, & Mertens, 2009; McKee, Schlehofer & Thew, 2013; Singleton, Jones, & Hanumantha, 2014).

The author attempted to incorporate all of the above in the survey instrument used to provide this research data. The data that resulted showed that in many respects the information needs and the connection between the Deaf and the public library probably closely resembles those of the general population. However, unlike the latter, their unique communication and literacy challenges point to potential barriers to library use. The survey did reinforce the importance of attention to these barriers, which clearly must be addressed and broken down if the public library in general is to have any chance of being an agenda item for the Deaf.

Recommendations arising from the survey include placing library staff on the same level as their Deaf users by learning sign language, employing the Deaf, or simply displaying sensitivity to Deaf culture. The study also served to remind us of how easily and inadvertently the Deaf are not made to feel at home in the public library. The absence of flashing alarm systems and the awareness that conventional public address systems do not reach the Deaf, physical layouts of chairs, tables, and service desks, poor lighting, poorly worded signage, and anything that impairs visibility are leading culprits. Incompatibility with the public library results from other, subtle failings such as not realizing the importance of providing seating at the front for library events or promoting use of self service issue machines (thereby alleviating potential communication frustrations). As long as the Deaf feel that no attempt is being made to include them in library events by providing interpreters, as evidently large numbers of them do, then there will not be large scale improving of relations, either.

The survey instrument and sample used was far from perfect. It was a reflection of the authors desire to not undertake case studies of particular public library systems but rather to have a blended amalgamation of the thoughts and experiences of members of Deaf communities from all over the United States. As noted elsewhere in the dissertation, time and finances are essential ingredients for a successful in-depth study on the Deaf undertaken by a hearing researcher. The lessons learned in undertaking this survey can certainly be applied to a study involving a smaller geographic sample, which will most likely suit the needs of a public library undertaking a user needs study of their local Deaf community. Perhaps the greatest lesson learned by the author was that acute attention needs to be paid to the wording of such survey questions. Given literacy abilities, to what extent are questions liable to be misinterpreted? Is an open or closed response the right one for obtaining the desired answer? Finally and above all else, the opinions of the Deaf themselves *must* be sought when designing any kind of survey instrument requiring their participation.

The favourable comments in the survey, for example with library events are a reflection of satisfactory experiences with public libraries that to some degree or another cater to Deaf users needs. They show what is possible. From comments received from several survey participants, there was some indignation felt at question seven (which asked which library services are of interest). Those comments suggested that it was wrong to imply that the Deaf are different from general library users in their interests. The findings of the study also show that it is not the case that they are necessarily lacking any interest in availing themselves of public library services. However, until attention is paid to the natural barriers which stand in the way of their using the public library they will continue with their tendency to not use them.

In his overview of Deaf Culture, and the respective stances of the Deaf and hearing worlds, the following observation of Gannon (2012, p. 363) would seem to be at the very heart of the matter:

It is a lamentable fact that, in matters relating to the deaf, their education and well-being, few if any take the trouble to get the opinion of the very people most concerned-the deaf themselves.

This dissertation has attempted to get the opinions of the Deaf on public libraries in a manner not previously done. They say that the public library is not confirmed on their agenda, but pencilled in.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Study

The findings from this study leave the door open for potential further exploration in a number of areas.

- Measuring the extent to which cultural barriers are a factor in the Deaf using public libraries was not a function of this survey. Section 2.4 underlined the importance of understanding the Deaf in the context of Deaf culture and it is suggested that for the librarian seeking to connect to their Deaf community, knowledge and exploration of the culture is vital.
- In section 5.2 it was noted that respondents see the public library as not offering events of interest to the Deaf community. This is interesting, and exactly what types of events will serve to engage the Deaf remains to be seen. There may well be a connection to the aspect of Deaf culture.

- Mention was also made in section 5.2 of the fact that one quarter of respondents suggested that providing sign language interpreters for library events would make no difference to their frequency of visits. At this point one can only speculate on possible reasons why. It would appear that there is much to be explored on the basis of this one statistic.
- The relationship of the Deaf to the e-book, is evidently from the literature review not one that has been documented. The survey results indicated that it is not a medium that is of high interest to the Deaf. Nevertheless, given the lack of discussion on this topic, and the recent introduction of bilingual bimodal e-books (Mirus, 2016) there appears to be scope for deeper examination in the future.
- At several points in this study, emphasis has been made on the significance of sign language in Deaf culture. In the same way that the author incorporated an American Sign Language translation on video into this study's survey instrument, and as mentioned in the bimodal e-book example above, thought should be given as to how sign language can best be used in a variety of settings to act as a bridge between the public library and the Deaf. For example, much mention has been made of the need to provide sign language interpretation for library events, but interpretation should not be confined only to in-person situations. A useful follow-up study might measure the impact of introducing sign language translated videos to a library's web site.

Appendix I: Informed Consent Form

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a Master's degree candidate in Management of Library & Information Services at Aberystwyth University in the United Kingdom. I am currently researching how the public library can serve Deaf and hard of hearing adults for my dissertation.

I have designed a survey to gather relevant information for this project. The survey is designed to investigate what services Deaf and hard-of-hearing people would need. I also intend to find out how Deaf and hard of hearing people use the library. My hope is to use this information to improve public library services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.

Input from the Deaf and hard of hearing community is very valuable for my research. I am very interested in your answers to the attached questions. Your participation is voluntary and any information you give will be kept confidential. Your responses will be completely anonymous. I will summarize the data in my dissertation. There will be no information about individual responses. Once the study is complete, the data will be destroyed.

To participate in this survey, please follow the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/S2F2563>

An ASL video version of the survey can also be found at:

<https://youtu.be/-gRZpof03o8>

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

David Payne

Appendix II: Original (Pilot) Survey

Survey investigating how the public library can serve Deaf & Hard of Hearing Adults

An ASL video version is also available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU7hHE_Q7p8&feature=em-upload_owner

Date:

1. Are you? _____ Deaf _____ Hard of Hearing
2. What is your age group? 18-24____ 25-34____ 35-44____ 45-54____
55-64____ 65 and over____
3. Are you? (1)____ Male (2)____ Female (3)____ Other
4. Have you been deaf most or all of your life? (1)____ No (2)____ Yes
5. How did you communicate with your parents? (Please check all that apply)
(1)____ American Sign Language (2)____ Voice
(3)____ Home sign (4)____ Another sign language (6)____ Sim-Com
(7)____ Other
6. How do you communicate one-on-one with hearing people?
(1)____ Writing (2)____ Speech
(3)____ Texting or Instant messaging
7. What is the most comfortable way for hearing people to communicate with you?
(1)____ ASL (2)____ Writing
(3)____ Speech (4)____ Texting or instant messaging

8. How often do you visit a public library?
- (1)____ Often (2)____ Sometimes
- (3)____ Rarely (4)____ Never
9. What are the reasons for your answers to question 8?
10. Does the public library do a good job offering these services to you?
- (1) Books____ (2) Computers____ (3) DVD's____
- (4) Events____ (5) Community Information____
11. Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf people?
- (1)____No (2)____Yes
12. Do you use other services or sources (whether through the Internet or face to face) as alternatives to public libraries? If yes, what are the reasons?
13. Do you consider the public library to be a Deaf friendly environment?
- (1)____No (2)____Yes
14. Please list three reasons why or why not?
- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

15. What public library services interest you the most? (check all that apply and circle your highest priority)

- (1)____ Lending of books (2)____ Children's services & events
(3)____ Research (4)____ Other events
(5)____ e-books (6)____ Databases & electronic
resources
(7)____ Publicly available computers (8)____ Videophones
(9)____ Other (please state) _____

16. Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library?

- (1)____ No (2)____ Yes

17. How often do you visit your local public library's web site?

- (1)____ Regularly (more than once a month) (2)____ Often (about once a
month)
(3)____ Rarely (a few times a year) (4)____ Never

18. How many times have you attended community library events that were ASL interpreted or that had CART services within the past year? _____

Did these events meet your needs? (1)____ No (2)____ Yes

Why or why not?

19. If your local public library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?

- (1)____ No (2)____ Yes

20. How could the public library improve service for you?

Appendix III: Final (Amended) Survey

Survey investigating how the public library can serve Deaf & Hard of Hearing Adults

An ASL video version of the survey is also available at:

<https://youtu.be/-gRZpof03o8>

Date:

1. How often do you visit a public library?

_____ Regularly (more than once a month) _____ Often (about once a month)

_____ Rarely (a few times a year) _____ Never

2. Why do you visit a public library?

3. Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf or Hard of Hearing people?

_____ No (go to question 4) _____ Yes

If **yes**, how many times have you met up with other Deaf or Hard of Hearing people in the library in the past 6 months?

4. Do you use other services or sources, such as the Internet, to locate information instead of public libraries?

_____ No (go to question 5) _____ Yes

If **yes**, what services or resources do you usually use? Why do you prefer to use these resources instead of public libraries?

5. Do you consider the public library to be a Deaf or Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

_____ No _____ Yes

6. Please list three reasons why it is Deaf or Hard of Hearing friendly.

1)

2)

3)

Please list three reasons why it is not Deaf or Hard of Hearing friendly.

1)

2)

3)

7. What public library services would interest you the most? (check all that apply)

_____ Lending of books

_____ Children's services & events

_____ Research & Databases

_____ e-books

_____ DVD's

_____ Computers

_____ Videophones

_____ Providing community information

_____ Programs for Adults

_____ Providing a Deaf literature collection (works by Deaf authors, with Deaf characters in novels, poetry, and plays)

_____ Other reasons (please state) _____

8. Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library?

_____ No (go to question 10)

_____ Yes

9. How often do you use e-books from your library?

_____ Regularly (more than once a month)

_____ Often (about once a month)

_____ Rarely (a few times a year)

_____ Never

10. How often do you visit your local public library's web site?
- ____ Regularly (more than once a month) ____ Often (about once a month)
- ____ Rarely (a few times a year) ____ Never
11. How many times have you attended community library events that were ASL interpreted or that had CART services within the past year? _____
- Did these events meet your needs? ____ No ____ Yes
- Why or why not?
12. If your local public library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?
- ____ No ____ Yes
13. How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?

About You

14. What is your age group? 18-30 ____ 31-50 ____ 51-64 ____ 65 and over ____
15. As a Deaf or deaf person, how would you describe yourself?
- ____ Deaf/Hard of Hearing from birth
- ____ became Deaf/Hard of Hearing after age 2
- ____ became Deaf/Hard of Hearing as an adult

16. How do you communicate one-on-one with people who do not sign?
_____ Writing _____ Speech _____ Texting or Instant Messaging
17. What is the most comfortable way for hearing people to communicate with you?
_____ ASL _____ Writing
_____ Speech _____ Texting or instant messaging

Thank you very much.

Appendix IV: Examples of Completed Surveys

#15

COMPLETE

Collector: Social Media Post 2 (Facebook Link)
 Started: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 10:47:36 PM
 Last Modified: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 10:56:05 PM
 Time Spent: 00:08:20
 IP Address: 207.236.22.59

PAGE 3

Q1: How often do you visit a public library?

Often (about once a month) (2)

Q2: Why do you visit a public library?

Borrow books & DVDs, use wifi, change of pace to work in a different place than home. (6)

Q3: Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people?

Yes, (1)

If yes, how many times have you met up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the library in the past 6 months? (0)

Not at all. But it's a good idea.

Q4: Do you use other services or sources, such as the Internet, to locate information instead of public libraries?

Yes, (2)

If yes, what services or resources do you usually use? Why do you prefer to use these resources instead of public libraries?

Whatever is needed, starting with the obvious (Google). I used to work as an info & referral person and I'm now an editor so I know how to find info.

Q5: Do you consider the public library to be a Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

No (1)

Q6: Please list 3 reasons why it is Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly and 3 reasons why it is not Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

IS .. Well lit. (12)

IS .. Space to meet (12)

IS .. DVDs are captioned (2)

ISNT .. Ton of programs but never have (2) interpreters

ISNT .. No outreach to the deaf community (4)

ISNT .. Staff never know any ASL (1)

Q7: What public library services would interest you the most?

Lending of books, DVD's, Programs for adults, (1)(5)(8)

Community information (9)

Other (please specify)

Can't think of others, you've covered them all. Oh, (6) also WIFI. I didn't check "computers" because I don't use theirs, I bring my own.

- Q8: Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library? No (go to question 10) (1)
- Q9: How often do you use e-books from your library? Respondent skipped this question
- Q10: How often do you visit your local public library's web site? Rarely (a few times a year) (3)
- Q11: How many times have you attended community library events that were ASL interpreted or that had CART services within the past year? Did these events meet your needs? Why or why not?
None, never and not at all. I pick up their program brochures but they never say anything like "ASL interpreter upon request." Just silence as to our needs. (3) (4)
- Q12: If your local library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often? Yes (2)
- Q13: How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?
Provide interpreters without waiting to be asked. Have a deaf person on staff who knows how to outreach to the deaf community. (2) (1) (3)
- Q14: What is your age group? 51-64 (3)
- Q15: As a Deaf or deaf person, how would you describe yourself? became Deaf after age 2 (2)
(1) (2) (3)
- Q16: How do you communicate one-on-one with people who do not sign? Writing, Speech, Texting or Instant Messaging
(1) (2) (4)
- Q17: What is the most comfortable way for hearing people to communicate with you? ASL, Writing, Texting or Instant Messaging

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Social Media Post 2 (Facebook Link)

Started: Friday, May 13, 2016 2:30:24 PM

Last Modified: Friday, May 13, 2016 2:42:32 PM

Time Spent: 00:12:07

IP Address: 69.154.253.108

PAGE 3

Q1: How often do you visit a public library?

(1) Regularly (more than once a month)

Q2: Why do you visit a public library?

Ever since I was a young kid, I read tons of books to absorb illustrations with captions. That's how I learn to pick up new vocabulary.

(2)

Q3: Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people?

No (go to question 4) (1)

Q4: Do you use other services or sources, such as the Internet, to locate information instead of public libraries?

Yes (2)
If yes, what services or resources do you usually use? Why do you prefer to use these resources instead of public libraries?
With access to your own computer, Ipad or Iphone- it's so much easier to get information quicker. I used to own a whole set of the encyclopedia when I was younger - I would look through each set of alphabet order. Trip Advisor and other resources are available.

Q5: Do you consider the public library to be a Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

Yes (2)

Q6: Please list 3 reasons why it is Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly and 3 reasons why it is not Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly.

1.

not enough interesting events appealing to the Deaf community (6)

2.

all events should have interpreters when requested (2)

Q7: What public library services would interest you the most?

Lending of books (1), Children's services & events, (2)
e-books, Community information, (4)

Providing a Deaf literature collection (works by Deaf authors, which include Deaf characters in novels, poetry, and plays) (10)

Q8: Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library?

Yes (2)

Q9: How often do you use e-books from your library?

Rarely (a few times a year) (3)

Q10: How often do you visit your local public library's web site?

Regularly (more than once a month) (1)

P1120

Q11: How many times have you attended community library events that were ASL interpreted or that had CART services within the past year? Did these events meet your needs? Why or why not?

3 3 times and then events are well met and informative.

Q12: If your local library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?

Yes (2)

Q13: How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?

As long as events are interpreted, deaf people will attend more often. (2)

Q14: What is your age group?

65 and over (4)

Q15: As a Deaf or deaf person, how would you describe yourself?

Deaf from birth (1)

Q16: How do you communicate one-on-one with people who do not sign?

Writing, Speech (1) (2)

Q17: What is the most comfortable way for hearing people to communicate with you?

Writing, Texting or Instant Messaging (2) (3) (4)

#8

COMPLETE

Collector: Social Media Post 2 (Facebook Link)

Started: Saturday, May 28, 2016 9:42:17 PM

Last Modified: Saturday, May 28, 2016 9:56:12 PM

Time Spent: 00:13:55

IP Address: 172.16.1.100

PAGE 3

Q1: How often do you visit a public library?

Regularly (more than once a month)

(1)

Q2: Why do you visit a public library?

Reading materials both for pleasure and research.

(2)

Q3: Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people?

Yes, (1)

If yes, how many times have you met up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the library in the past 6 months?
Five times.

Q4: Do you use other services or sources, such as the Internet, to locate information instead of public libraries?

Yes, (2)

If yes, what services or resources do you usually use? Why do you prefer to use these resources instead of public libraries?
Convenience.

Q5: Do you consider the public library to be a Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

No (1)

Q6: Please list 3 reasons why it is Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly and 3 reasons why it is not Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly.

1.

People will not go out of their way to help you with gathering research materials. (1)

2.

Sometimes you cannot reserve space to communicate in groups. We tend to make more noise, and created spectacles of ourselves as we sign. (8)

3.

Closed captioned movies are not always available. (5)

4.

Some librarians and libraries are deaf friendly, having someone on staff who can sign and meeting too s readily available. (14)

5.

Some libraries have collections of deaf authors and community event notices of deaf events. (5)

6.

Somali raries have communication devices for the deaf. (6)

Q7: What public library services would interest you the most?

(1) Lending of books, (2) Children's services & events, (3) Research & databases, (4) e-books, (5) DVD's, (6) Computers, (7) Videophones, (8) Programs for adults, (9) Community information, (10) Providing a Deaf literature collection (works by Deaf authors, which include Deaf characters in novels, poetry, and plays)

Q8: Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library?

No (go to question 10) (1)

Q9: How often do you use e-books from your library?

Respondent skipped this question (5)

Q10: How often do you visit your local public library's web site?

Often (about once a month) (2)

Q11: How many times have you attended community library events that were ASL interpreted or that had CART services within the past year? Did these events meet your needs? Why or why not?

None in the cedarhurst area. (0)

Q12: If your local library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?

Yes (2)

Q13: How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?

Make it deaf friendly. (1) (5) (2) (6) (4) (3)

Q14: What is your age group?

51-64 (7)

Q15: As a Deaf or deaf person, how would you describe yourself?

became Deaf after age 2 (2)

Q16: How do you communicate one-on-one with people who do not sign?

Texting or Instant Messaging, Speech (7) (2)

Q17: What is the most comfortable way for hearing people to communicate with you?

(4) Texting or Instant Messaging, (3) Speech, (1) ASL

#21

COMPLETE

Collector: Social Media Post 2 (Facebook Link)

Started: Monday, June 13, 2016 4:20:44 PM

Last Modified: Monday, June 13, 2016 4:24:05 PM

Time Spent: 00:03:21

IP Address: 49.126.100.50

PAGE 3

Q1: How often do you visit a public library?

Never

(4)

Q2: Why do you visit a public library?

Respondent skipped this question

Q3: Is the library a good place to meet up with other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people?

No (go to question 4)

(2)

Q4: Do you use other services or sources, such as the Internet, to locate information instead of public libraries?

No (go to question 5)

(1)

Q5: Do you consider the public library to be a Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly environment?

No

(1)

Q6: Please list 3 reasons why it is Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly and 3 reasons why it is not Deaf and Hard of Hearing friendly.

1.

Deaf people tend to make a lot of noises as the rule in the library is to be quiet

(3)

2.

No room to interact due to many bookshelves and tables

(8)

3.

No deaf collection books and journals

(6)

Q7: What public library services would interest you the most?

Children's services & events

(2)

Q8: Are you aware of the availability of e-books from your local public library?

Yes

(2)

Q9: How often do you use e-books from your library?

Never

(4)

Q10: How often do you visit your local public library's web site?

Never

(4)

Q11: How many times have you attended community library events that were ASL interpreted or that had CART services within the past year? Did these events meet your needs? Why or why not?

Never had the events for ASL

(3)

Q12: If your local library provided an interpreter for library events, would you visit the library more often?

Yes

(2)

Q13: How could the public library improve services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community?

Subscribe more deaf journals magazines and books

(5)

Improving Public Library Services to the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Community

SurveyM

- Q14: What is your age group? 51-64 (3)
- Q15: As a Deaf or deaf person, how would you describe yourself? Deaf from birth (1)
- Q16: How do you communicate one-on-one with people who do not sign? Speech (2)
- Q17: What is the most comfortable way for hearing people to communicate with you? Speech (3)

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Abbreviations

ASL	American Sign Language
CART	Communication Access Real time Translation (the instantaneous translation of spoken language into a text format)

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